

Iran increases number of pilgrims

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran has agreed with Saudi Arabia that 120,000 Iranian pilgrims will make the pilgrimage to Mecca next year, an increase of 20,000 over this year, the official Islamic Republic News Agency reported Sunday. The agency said the agreement was reached during a recent visit to Saudi Arabia by the head of Iran's pilgrim delegation, Mohammad Mohammadi Rezaee. The next pilgrimage takes place in June of the coming year. Iran and Saudi Arabia last year resumed diplomatic relations, broken off in the wake of riots in Mecca in 1987 in which 402 pilgrims, most of them Iranian, were killed in clashes with police. After the riots, Saudi Arabia had sharply reduced the number of Iranian pilgrims, which Iran estimated at 150,000 the year before the riots. The Iranian agency said a sharp increase from recent years and a reflection of improving relations between Riyadh and Tehran. Iran remained neutral in the Gulf war that ousted Iraqi troops from Kuwait, and has been seeking to improve relations with its Gulf Arab neighbours under the leadership of its pragmatic president, Hashemi Rafsanjani.

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Meeting reviews sports activities

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the honorary president of the Jordanian Olympic Committee, Sunday participated in the meeting of the presidents and secretaries of sports unions held at Al Hussein Youth City. During the meeting, held under the chairmanship of Minister of Youth Saleh Ershadat, the participants stressed the need to study the youth and sports movement with all its dimensions so as to move towards future aspirations which Jordan looks forward to under the leadership of His Majesty King Hussein. The participants agreed to crystallise the views Prince Hassan made during the meeting by proposing the formation of a mini-committee in order to prepare a working formula that defines the methods by which the problems and aspirations of the sports movement can be comprehensively viewed and consequently the broad lines of a plan for sports development can be set with the cooperation of Ministry of Youth and other ministries and institutions that look after youths such as the Ministry of Education. Dr. Ershadat earlier discussed the need to coordinate the annual activities of sports unions, and reviewed the participation of national teams in Arab, regional, and international contests.

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Baker begins Soviet visit

MOSCOW (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, opening a five-day visit to what he called the "former Soviet Union," was asked Sunday for formal U.S. recognition of republics' independence from the Kremlin. "This will help to crystallise authority," and to "stop further disintegration," said Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev after meeting Mr. Baker at the Russian Foreign Ministry late Sunday. But Mr. Baker hedged, saying "these are essential political issues that are internal" and which the Bush administration would not inject itself in the political struggle between Mikhail Gorbachev's central government and the new commonwealth of independent states. Mr. Baker arrived in Moscow earlier Sunday, carrying to the faltering Soviet Union undisclosed proposals for accelerating the reduction of the estimated 27,000 nuclear weapons stockpiled in four republics. The imminent breakup of the old union is raising concerns that the weapons cannot be safeguarded indefinitely. (See related story on page 8).

Red Cross worker shot in Mogadishu dies

GENEVA (AP) — A Red Cross relief worker shot in the Somali capital of Mogadishu died during the flight back to his native Belgium, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) said Sunday. An ICRC statement said Wim van Borelaere died of respiratory failure Saturday on the aircraft taking him from Nairobi to Antwerp. He was 30. He was shot last Wednesday in front of the headquarters of the Somali Red Crescent. Mogadishu has been wracked by growing anarchy and chaos during one month of inter-clan fighting.

Havel in Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — Czechoslovakia's Vaclav Havel arrived in Egypt on Sunday for a three-day visit during which he will meet with President Hosni Mubarak. Mr. Mubarak received Mr. Havel at the airport. He then escorted his visitor, who is visiting Egypt for the first time, to the Kubbah Presidential Palace where Mr. Havel was honoured with an official welcome ceremony. The two leaders will meet on Monday and they are expected to discuss the Middle East peace process, that was launched in Madrid, Spain on Oct. 30.

Iran speaker leaves for China

NICOSIA (R) — Iranian Parliamentary Speaker Mehdi Karubi left for China Sunday, Iran's national news agency IRNA said. Mr. Karubi is accompanied by Commerce Minister Abdolhossein Vahdani, Agriculture Minister Isa Kalanfar and First Deputy Foreign Minister Ali Mohammad Besharati. Mr. Karubi's 10-day trip will also take him to Yemen.

Guerrillas rocket 'security zone'

BEIRUT (AP) — The National Resistance Front, a coalition of leftist Lebanese factions, claimed Sunday its guerrillas fired two Katyusha rockets before dawn into Israel's self-styled "security zone" in South Lebanon. A communiqué by the front in Beirut said an "enemy post was directly hit" near the village of Saff Al Hawa in the zone's Bint Jbeil district just north of the Israeli border. The communiqué said there was no word of damage or casualties in the post, which it claimed was a centre for officers and members of an Israeli intelligence unit.

Turkish Airlines resumes trips to Beirut

BEIRUT (R) — A Turkish Airlines DC-9 landed at Beirut international airport Sunday, resuming flights to Lebanon after a 15-year break due to civil war. The step brought to 18 the number of foreign airlines which have resumed flights to Beirut since the end of Lebanon's civil war with the overthrow of rebel General Michel Aoun in October last year.

Bilaterals resume today; prospects uncertain

By Jordan Times Staff Reporters in Washington

ARAB-ISRAELI bilateral talks resume today at the State Department, and the focus will again be on reaching a final accord on the framework for independent Palestinian representation within the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Since negotiations adjourned last Thursday, the joint delegation has been holding extensive meetings to prepare a counter-proposal to Israel's insistence that the joint delegation be the legal reference for any agreements reached in the separate tracks — Palestinian and Jordanian.

Although the Israelis have recognised the dual-track approach to the negotiations, disagreement

also remained over how often a plenary meeting, which would bring the joint delegation and Israelis together, would be held and how many delegates from each of the three parties would attend.

In their last proposal, made Thursday evening, the Israelis wanted the plenary meetings to be the reference point for the separate Palestinian and Jordanian negotiating teams. The Jordanians and Palestinians will insist that plenary meetings only deal with "procedural issues and not issues of substance concerning the separate agendas," a Jordanian delegate said.

Jordanian delegates appeared cautious Sunday over whether Monday's meetings of the heads of three parties will resolve the

issue and end a week of corridor diplomacy.

"We do not know where we will end up, the Israelis are very stubborn on the issue of the legal reference," one delegate said.

Another Jordanian delegate, also cautious in his assessment of chances for progress in Monday's session, said that the wrangling over separating the two tracks "is crucial and sets the tone for the whole process because the issues discussed now will prejudice the final agreement."

Although it is not certain that the problem will be resolved on Monday, Arab delegates are trying not to resort to the co-sponsor before exhausting all possible options open to them.

However, the head of the Palestinian delegation, Haidar

Abdul Shafi, and members of the steering committee reportedly met Sunday with U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs Edward Djerdjian. No details of the meeting were immediately available.

Arab diplomats and delegates say they expect the Israeli delegation to "soften its procedural demands" this week as the deadline for their stay in Washington nears.

The diplomats and sources close to the Israeli delegation say the Israelis may put forward a comprehensive peace package to Jordan as well as an Interim Self-Government Arrangement (ISGA) proposal to the Palestinian delegates before leaving for Israel later this week.

If indeed they do this, the

sources said, it could be an attempt to put the "ball back into the Arab court in order to score points at Arab expense with the American administration and media."

"The Israelis want to appear to be pushing peace forward with this last dramatic gesture before leaving the U.S. capital," said one Arab delegate, who insisted on anonymity. "But in fact what they are doing is trying to score a point to their advantage without staying behind to carry out constructive discussions of their proposals," he added.

Observers say Jordanians and Palestinians will seek to prevent such a course of events because they consider presenting such packages at this time as "putting the horse before the cart."

"The issue of separation of the delegation and finalising the procedural framework necessary to carry it out is the crux of the conflict. The definition of the Palestinian identity and its status is the core issue," one observer said.

But if this scenario materialises this week, the Arab delegates will take the proposal and study it in detail, but they will continue to insist on resolving the separation issue prior to discussion of the Israeli peace and ISGA packages.

The Syrian and Lebanese delegations will also meet with their Israeli counterparts Monday to continue talks, which proceeded uninterrupted last week despite reports by Syrian delegates that there was no progress made.

A Lebanese delegate who insisted on anonymity said that the

delegation would discuss the venue of bilateral talks but he said they will continue to insist on remaining in the U.S. capital until progress is achieved.

Israel had insisted on moving the talks to or near the region. Israeli delegations are expected to argue that the talks must make better progress if they are removed from the glare of the media attention in Washington to some place where they will attract less publicity.

But the Lebanese delegate told journalists in a briefing that the "lack of newspaper and television attention the bilateral talks have so far received undercuts this argument."

George Hawatmeh, Nermeen Murad and Ghadeer Taher contributed to this report.



Two scenes from Sunday's session of the Lower House of Parliament (photos by Yusef Al 'Allan)



Sharif Zeid government poised to secure vote of confidence today

By P.V. Vivekanand Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Be Shaker was Sunday assured of parliamentary endorsement with a comfortable margin as speeches by deputies in the Lower House drew to a close on the first day of the vote of confidence session.

Parliamentary observers as well as members in the Sharif Zeid cabinet, which took office last month, expected a minimum of 48 votes in favour of the government when the actual voting process takes place on the floor Monday against the needed absolute majority of 41 votes in the 80-member House.

As was widely expected, the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which has 22 deputies in the House, said it would vote against

the government since the group opposed not only the ongoing peace talks with Israel in which Jordan is taking part but also the whole concept of any negotiations with the Jewish state.

Others who indicated they would vote "no" included several leftist and pan-Arab nationalist lawmakers who argued that the peace talks would not produce a settlement addressing the fundamental issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict — the quest for Palestinian national rights.

The "yes" votes which were pledged in support of the government Sunday included 17 from the Constitution Bloc, 16 from the National Bloc, six from the Independent Islamic Bloc, at least four from the Democratic Bloc and four from independents.

"We are confident of securing a minimum of 48 votes," said a

senior member of the cabinet. "It can only go up during the balloting process," he told the Jordan Times.

The Brotherhood's position vis-a-vis the government was presaged by Deputy Masoud Khreisat from Salt, who denounced the American-led Arab-Israeli peace process launched in Madrid on Oct. 30 and called for a holy war to liberate "all of Palestine."

Deputy Khreisat also voiced the movement's rejection of the agreements that Jordan has reached with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to restructure the Kingdom's economy and a seven-year recovery programme announced by the government last week.

In general, the Brotherhood deputy expressed the group's sharp differences with almost ev-

ery sphere of government policy — politics, economy, education and social affairs.

On the peace talks, Deputy Khreisat said: "Based on our principled stand towards the so-called peace with the enemy (Israel) and the efforts to achieve that, we are obliged to reject such negotiations."

"Therefore, we withhold our vote of confidence in the government," he declared.

Deputies, ranging from pro-establishment traditionalists to the right and left of the Jordanian political spectrum, addressed the House Sunday and also tackled issues such as Jordan's role in the new world order, the ostensible economy, the Kingdom's agreement with the IMF, the standard and cost of living, agriculture,

(Continued on page 5)

Israel not to discuss Palestinian autonomy in talks this week

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli delegates will not discuss the autonomy plan at the heart of peace proposals during current negotiations with Palestinians in Washington, right-wing cabinet ministers said Sunday.

Yisrael Neeman and Rehavam Zeevi, both opponents of the peace talks, said Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir assured them during the weekly cabinet meeting that the subject would not be discussed until it was debated by ministers.

"The prime minister said in response to my question that they'll not be able in this round to get to these matters at all," Mr. Neeman, the science minister, told reporters.

The comments suggested there would be little progress in the talks, which resume Monday, before the Israeli delegates leave Washington later this week.

Mr. Zeevi, minister without portfolio, said: "Based on the clearest way that no matter of substance will be presented — especially the matter of autonomy that most worries me and my

colleagues — until there is a discussion either in the government or the cabinet."

Mr. Shamir also told the cabinet that political uncertainty in the Soviet Union meant proposed multilateral Middle East talks planned for Moscow at the end of January might have to be moved.

Israeli negotiators met the joint Jordanian-Palestinian team in Washington last week but all 20 hours were spent arguing over Israel's rejection of an independent status for Palestinian delegates.

Israeli negotiators, who refused to attend the Washington talks until five days after the scheduled start, spoke more optimistically of their simultaneous negotiations with Syrian and Lebanese teams.

Israel, which expects its negotiators to return this week, is still insisting future talks be held elsewhere, either in Europe or the Middle East.

The United States convened talks in Washington after Israel refused to continue the meetings

in Madrid, where the negotiations opened six weeks ago, and an alternative site was not agreed by Israel and the Arabs.

Israel is demanding that talks on self-rule for the 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip take place in a subcommittee of the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Under the initial U.S. plan for the peace talks, the Israelis and Palestinians are to negotiate self-rule over the next year and to begin talks within three years or the final settlement, which would take effect in five years.

The Palestinians see self-rule as giving them wide control over their land and resources en route to full independence.

But Mr. Shamir's assurance to far-right ministers on Sunday indicated that Israel's government has not defined what it is willing to offer Palestinians.

The premier has vowed never to yield an inch of the land occupied in the 1967 war and the army has tightened its grip on the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip since the peace talks began.

Iraqi Kurdish leaders plan election

KHALIFAN, Iraq (Agencies) — Kurdish leaders, at loggerheads over negotiations with Baghdad, agreed Sunday to hold elections for a representative assembly in northern Iraq.

The plan was adopted by the Iraqi Kurdistan Front, an alliance of eight rebel parties paralysed by rivalry between its two heavyweights, Jalal Talabani and Massoud Barzani.

No date was fixed. A group of political scientists and lawyers will report in two weeks with advice on how to hold the vote.

Both Mr. Talabani and Mr. Barzani were in Khalifan, 60 kilometres from the Turkish and Iranian borders, on Sunday when the front agreed that parties would be represented in an elected legislature according to their popular vote.

Only parties receiving at least seven per cent support will get seats. How the assembly will assign executive powers has not been decided.

Kurdish leaders say the election is intended not as a step towards independence but as an overdue attempt by Kurds to put their house in order.

"We have a leadership problem in Kurdistan now," Mr. Barzani told Reuters. "So many things have been blocked by our inability to make decisions, sometimes you feel powerless."

A post-Gulf war Kurdish rebellion was crushed by the Iraqi government in March but Western pressure keeps Baghdad from regaining its grip on the north.

(Continued on page 5)

Settlers rampage through W. Bank, attack property

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Jewish settlers rampaged through the occupied West Bank town of Al Bireh Sunday, smashing car windows and stoning houses, Israel Radio and military sources said.

The settlers' action came after the army eased a curfew imposed on the town and nearby areas two weeks ago when a Jewish settler was killed as he drove through Al Bireh, 10 kilometres north of Jerusalem.

Soldiers said they had detained several Israeli settlers for throwing stones in Al Bireh.

Residents of the town and adjacent Ramallah had complained of several settler attacks on property during the curfew.

According to Israel Radio, at least five settlers took part in Sunday's rampage, smashing windows and eight cars and stoning Palestinian homes. It came after the army limited the curfew to daylight hours. It had been in effect 24 hours a day.

The radio reported that settlers also rampaged through the West Bank towns of Hebron and Halhoul on Sunday.

Meanwhile, 10 police have been charged with using excessive force to coerce Palestinians into false confessions, and authorities decided against prosecuting two Palestinian leaders for taking a role in the four-year Palestinian uprising.

A police spokeswoman said seven policemen and three officers were accused last week in district court of beating Palestinians during interrogation.

The charges focus on a December 1989 interrogation of six East Jerusalem Arabs, two suspected of killing a fellow Palestinian and attempting to kill a second, the radio said.

Suspects Ali and Ismail Elgul denied the murder charges, but Ali confessed after being beaten

with clubs and rubber hoses, the radio added.

Prosecutor Dorit Beinish made the decision not to prosecute Palestinian leaders Sari Nusseibeh and Radwan Abu Ayyash on charges they supported the uprising, said a justice ministry spokeswoman.

Mr. Beinish rejected a petition by right-wing lawmaker Eliakim Hatztni, she said, based on the difficulty in proving the charge and recommendations against prosecution by security officials.

Mr. Hatztni charged his petition was turned down on political grounds.

Both Mr. Abu Ayyash, a journalist, and Mr. Nusseibeh, a professor, are known as supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

On Saturday, Israeli troops shot and wounded six Palestinians in the occupied Gaza Strip. The wounded were all from Gaza Strip City's Shati refugee camp, home to more than 42,000 Palestinians, hospital officials in the city said.

In Gaza's Khan Yunis refugee camp, three masked men shot to death 29-year-old Jamal Kulab, Palestinian journalists said. The reason for the murder was not immediately known and the army command had no confirmation.

Also Saturday, the military issued an order barring Palestinians from moving on roadsides in the occupied territories from 5 p.m. till 6 a.m.

An army spokesman said the order refers to an area of 150 metres from each side of the road, but does not cover the cities or the roads themselves. It will be in effect indefinitely, he said.

According to Israel Radio, the order came after the army reached a conclusion that most of the armed or stone-throwing attacks in the occupied territories are carried out from the roadsides after dark.

Iran seeking to replace Iraq as Sudan's main backer

KHARTOUM (AP) — Iranian President Hashemi Rafsanjani appeared Sunday to be moving to fill a military and economic vacuum resulting from Iraq's defeat in the Gulf war and form a radical alliance with Sudan.

The Iranian leader is also believed to be trying to compensate for diminishing influence in Lebanon.

The move appears to be worrying Egypt, Sudan's northern neighbour, and other moderate Arabs as well as Western countries.

Mr. Rafsanjani, on the second day of a three-day state visit to Sudan, the first by an Iranian head of state since the 1979 Islamic revolution, pledged to put all Iran's "experience in the fields of construction, industry, rehabilitation and defence" at Sudan's disposal.

He made the pledge at a mass rally in Khartoum attended by representatives of the popular committees which was patterned after those founded in Libya.

Sudan has developed close ties with Libya but the two countries relations have reportedly been strained lately because Libya suspected that Sudanese Muslim fundamentalists were trying to spread their ideology to Libya and other Arab countries.

The government of military leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir is greatly influenced by the radical National Islamic Front, led by Hassan Turabi.

"After the demise of the Com-

unist system and given the potentials of Sudan and Iran in as many fields, we should have a major role in shaping the future of the world as Muslims," Mr. Rafsanjani told the rally.

The official Iranian news agency IRNA reported meanwhile that the two countries concluded commercial talks aimed at establishing a shipping line, expanding telecommunications links and setting up a joint chamber of commerce.

It said a Sudanese delegation would soon visit Iran to purchase agricultural machinery and quoted a local Sudanese newspaper as saying that two Iranian ships laden with road machinery were to arrive in Sudan within the next two weeks under an agreement reached during an earlier visit to Khartoum of Iranian Minister of Construction Jihad Gholamreza Ferozesh.

The two sides also agreed that Sudan export corn, meat, vegetable oil and animal skins to Iran and purchase agricultural machinery, electric appliances, buses, oil and its derivatives from the Persian country.

Meanwhile, Sudan's armed forces Chief-of-Staff General Hassan Abdul Rahman Ali and commander of Iranian Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps Mohsen Rezaie met to discuss closer cooperation.

The talks were a continuation of those started Friday by Lieutenant-General Bashir and Iran's Minister of Defence and

Armed Forces Logistics Akbar Torkan.

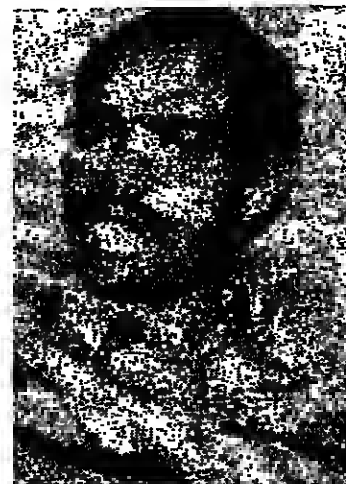
A statement by the high command of the Sudanese armed forces said the two men reviewed "developments of military ties and cooperation and exchange of expertise."

It said the meeting was attended by Sudanese Minister of State for Defence Maj. Gen. Osman Mohammad Al Hassan and commanders of the People's Defence forces in Sudan, a kind of a militia formed by Gen. Bashir's junta to guard against possible coup attempts by the army. Gen. Bashir toppled Sudan's civilian government of Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi in a coup he led June 30, 1989.

The high command statement suggested that Iran would provide military help and training for the Sudanese army which is engaged in an 8½-year-old southern civil war. The war continues largely because of the refusal of rebels from the mainly Christian and animist south to accept Gen. Bashir's restoration of Sharia or Islamic law.

Sharia, a strict legal and ethical code, was reinstated after a five-year suspension. Limb amputations and other harsh penalties have been restored. Most women and school girls are required to wear in public Islamic clothing that covers the body except for the face and hands.

The New York Times reported Friday that Iran appears to be "shifting its operations" to Sudan



Omar Hassan Al Bashir

to compensate for shrinking presence in Lebanon.

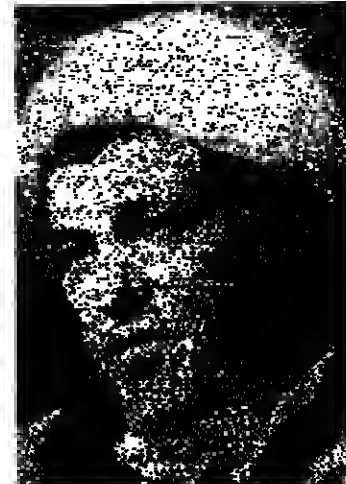
It quoted unidentified Saudi, Egyptian and American officials as saying that Iran has sent between 1,000 and 2,000 Revolutionary Guards to train Sudanese army and security forces.

In Cairo, Samir Ragab, a newspaper editor known to be close to President Hosni Mubarak, wrote last week that Gen. Bashir is making "big mistake" by expecting Iran to save Sudan from its political and economic difficulties.

He said that Gen. Bashir and his aides will "soon discover that Iranian fingers are meddling in their internal affairs."

Mr. Rafsanjani and Gen. Bashir met earlier Saturday and decided to form three joint committees to look after promoting cooperation. The two leaders held an hour-long tête-à-tête meeting late Friday.

At the rally held in Thar Erkwet area of Khartoum Satur-



Hashemi Rafsanjani

day, Mr. Rafsanjani wondered why Muslims, being quarter of the world population, with their human and material resources, should be so weak in the face of Zionism and imperialism.

He said Muslims now sitting with Israel "will feel ashamed of themselves" if they were to see the enthusiasm, faith and courage of the people who gathered to greet him. He was referring to the current Mideast peace talks in Washington.

Foreign Affairs Minister Akbar Velayati, Minister of Commerce Abdol Hossein Vahhaj, Information Minister Ali Fallahian and Head of the Plan and Budget Organisation Masoud Roghani Zanjani were among the delegation accompanying Mr. Rafsanjani.

The Iranian president and his delegation arrived here Friday after attending a summit meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in Dakar, Senegal.

Saddam ridicules reports of coup bids

BAGHDAD (R) — A relaxed and joking Saddam Hussein has appeared on television to ridicule foreign reports of coup attempts, showing his people and warning his officers that he is still firmly in charge.

In an informal four-hour chat with military commanders broadcast across the country on Saturday night, the Iraqi leader ridiculed foreign reports that he could be toppled, saying he was the only one who could oblige the West by starting a coup.

"Let us register the names of those who wish to participate with us so some of the Western circles can rest," he proposed playfully to officers seated around him on gilded chairs.

His comments were greeted by smiles and laughter from officers displaying medals from the Gulf war over Kuwait.

"Comrade Izzat will be the deputy commander of the coup and I would be the commander," President Saddam joked, pointing to a laughing Izzat Ibrahim, vice-chairman of his ruling Revolutionary Command Council, seated at his right.

The Iraqi leader, flanked by bodyguards, said there were daily reports in the West that a military coup was imminent and Western countries were seeking agents to launch an uprising.

"But such trivial dvarves do not exist in Iraq," he said.

Washington has vowed to maintain pressure on Iraq and said U.N. Security Council sanctions cannot be lifted as long as President Saddam remains in power, but the Iraqi leader has such a tight grip on the military that few analysts see any possibility of a coup from within.

Baghdad crushed anti-government rebellion in the Kurdish north and the Shiite south in February.

The Kurds continue to challenge his rule and their militias control a large strip of the mountainous north.

Iraq's National Assembly last week expelled five members, four Shiites and a Kurd, accusing them of treason, a charge which automatically carries the death penalty.

President Saddam earlier handed out "Mother Of All Battles" sashes and medals to more than 30 officers. He walked down a line of military men, embracing and joking with them while he pined on the star-shaped awards.

The awards entitle officers to become "friends of the president," an honour which carries privileges including land, a car and the right to see President Saddam once every three months.

President Saddam said U.N. sanctions would be worn away in time by foreign business interests which needed to sell goods to Iraq.

He said Iraq would repair its war damage unaided and could face nothing worse than the six weeks of U.S.-led bombing in January and February.

"I believe there can be nothing more serious than what has happened. We have crossed to the other side," he said.

He said he could not promise the Gulf war would be the last battle faced by his people, who were at war with Iran from 1980-88, "but I sincerely wish there will be no more."

Army probes U.S. soldier who got Saudi gift

MANCHESTER, Connecticut (AP) — A soldier injured in the Gulf war who later received a \$100,000 wedding gift from a Saudi prince faces disciplinary action because of the blast that injured him, a newspaper reported.

The army's criminal investigations division believes Sergeant Robert Snow, of New Britain, was injured by a U.S. cluster bomb that landed on a battlefield, the Journal Inquirer of Manchester reported Saturday.

The March 5 explosion in Sgt. Snow's tent nearly severed his arm and wounded two comrades. Investigators said the blast was in a bag under Sgt. Snow's cot, the newspaper said.

The Journal Inquirer said other soldiers also collected the tiny bombs and one woman used a pair as earrings.

While army investigators were completing their report last month, Sgt. Snow's wedding gift put him in the national spotlight.

Prince Bandar, the Saudi Arabian ambassador to the United States, who had met Sgt. Snow while both were being treated in a military hospital, attended his wedding reception Nov. 15 and gave him a cheque.

The public attention caused investigators to delay action in the case.

"We did not look vindictive," the Journal Inquirer quoted an unidentified army official as saying. "And we didn't know how to tell the prince. The last thing we needed was an international incident or some kind of screwup over protocol."

The prince did not know that Sgt. Snow was under investigation when he announced the gift, according to the report.

Sgt. Snow could not be reached for comment. There was no answer at a phone number listed for him Saturday.

Algerian Islamists enter poll arena in battle of heavyweights

ALGIERS (R) — Muslim fundamentalists are to enter the fray for the Dec. 26 Algerian general election, turning it into a battle of political heavyweights and extreme ideologies.

Divided between hardliners and pragmatists on how to achieve its aim of setting up an Islamic state, the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) at the weekend dropped threats to boycott the poll.

The election is the first multi-party contest for parliament after nearly three decades of rule by the National Liberation Front (FLN) since independence in 1962.

"To take a step towards the establishment of an Islamic state ... the FIS will take part in the forthcoming legislative elections," the party said, 10 days after the official election campaign began.

Diplomats said the decision by the largest opposition party effectively turned the poll into a battle between the FIS and the FLN which now advocates multi-party democracy.

And it gave the poll credibility for overseas and foreign creditors.

"The process towards multi-party democracy is the main winner from the decision," said one

Western diplomat, adding that this would help economic reforms to take root in the country.

"It is easier to have a managed transition if no one emerges with an overall majority," he said, giving just three of the 47 parties some chance of a bloc in the new 430-seat parliament. The election would enhance President Chadli Benjedid's authority as the supreme arbiter who appoints the prime minister without going to the biggest party.

Several diplomats and analysts have said a boycott by the FIS, which won most local authorities in regional elections in June 1990, would damage foreign confidence in future stability.

"Certainly my government would be worried by a big abstention," said one Western diplomat before the FIS decision.

The debt-burdened country is seeking foreign investment, particularly in oil and gas fields and hopes to attract some \$14 billion within 10 years.

One analyst commented that with the FIS in the arena, the FLN would gain from those fearful of wasting their vote on a smaller party and letting fundamentalists gain power.

"It is going to be a vote of sanction against either the FLN, over the state of the country, or

against the FIS," said another diplomat, referring to widespread poverty frequently blamed on FLN mismanagement.

He also suggested the FIS could suffer sanction from unrest last June which led to the election being postponed. "That depends on the behaviour of the FIS this time," said another.

FIS militants demanding an immediate Islamic state without a vote took to the streets in June, clashing with security forces. Fifty five people were killed and a state of emergency was declared.

But some diplomats suggested the violence could backfire on the FLN. "I think ordinary people's perceptions are mixed on the violence. They know who lost from it — their sons who were killed," said one.

One government minister, talking to Western diplomats, recently forecast the FIS would win 30 per cent of the seats in the five-year parliament.

Many ordinary Algerians see the FIS as the best organised party and the only one with a clear message.

"They are fighting for the poor. They have a clear position. They are moving ... not like others," said one Algerian Sunday.

Bahrain professor arrested

BAHRAIN (R) — A Bahraini theology professor has been arrested on his return to Bahrain after criticising Gulf governments at a seminar in Kuwait, relatives and officials said Sunday.

Police detained Sheikh Abdul Latif Al Mahmoud, associate professor of Islamic studies at Bahrain University, at Bahrain airport on Saturday evening, his nephew, Khaled Mahmoud, said.

"We knew he was arriving and we went to the airport to meet him but he disappeared. Later we heard he had been arrested," he said.

Official sources confirmed that Prof. Mahmoud, a fundamentalist Sunni cleric, was being held for questioning. They said a decision would soon be made on whether to press charges or set him free.

"His alleged speech was contrary to the laws of the land which require people to be respectful to the beads of state to the area," one source said.

Prof. Mahmoud was one of several professors from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) who criticised the 10-year-old economic and defence alliance for lack of progress.

He was quoted as telling the seminar last week that ruling families in the six GCC states did not deserve their privileges and their countries could not advance while systems of government remained unchanged.

The wealth of the country belonged to its people, not to the ruler to use as he wished, Prof. Mahmoud said. He questioned how GCC societies were to develop as long as governments stifled freedom of speech and censored newspapers.

Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates — all conservative monarchies — form the GCC.

The alliance, which is due to hold a summit in Kuwait next week, owns more than 40 per cent of the world's oil reserves.

Ozal: Syria supports 'terrorists'

BAHRAIN (R) — Turkish President Turgut Ozal, in an interview published Sunday, accused Syria of supporting Kurdish "terrorists" and warned President Hafez Al Assad that it caused resentment in Turkey.

Syria has been cautioned before and has always denied supporting the Kurdish rebel guerrillas. Mr. Ozal said in an interview with the daily Al Hayat conducted at the pan-Islamic summit last week in Senegal.

"But now, I believe that the Turkish people have come to realise the truth after following

up what has been written in the press," Mr. Ozal went on. "This is causing hostile feeling not against the Syrian people, but against the regime in Syria and I believe Hafez Al Assad should be wary of this."

The Syrians, he said, were supporting the Kurdistan Labour Party as well as the groups who have been conducting "terrorist" acts in Istanbul. He said the latter group "have been harboured" in Syria.

Mr. Ozal said Turkish journalists had gone to Syria and then to the Syrian-controlled Lebanese

Bekaa Valley "where they talked to the leaders of the terrorist groups and published several interviews with them in our papers. This proves and confirms that Syria is protecting those."

"According to my understanding, perhaps the terrorists have got that support since four or five years... at the time when the world order was based on a balance between the communist and capitalist worlds."

"But now," Mr. Ozal said, "both West and previously communist states are fighting terrorism."

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 ... Les Ma Thours de Spile
19:00 ... News in French
19:15 ... Weekly Sports Magazine
19:30 ... News in Hebrew
20:00 ... News in Arabic
20:30 ... Hey Dad
21:10 ... Nippon
22:00 ... News in English
22:30 ... Gabriela Fire

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 ... Fajr
06:16 ... (Sunrise) Doha
11:26 ... Dhuhr
14:12 ... Asr
16:36 ... Maghrib
17:58 ... Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swetfish Tel. 810740
Assumptions of God Church, Tel. 623785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590.
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440.
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Torrestran Church Tel. 622666

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541.
Anglican Church Tel. 623383, Tel. 628543.
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771351.
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261.
Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751.
Assume International Church Tel. 683326.
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295.
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932.
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691.

Another rise in temperatures will take place and winds will be north-westerly light to moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and sea calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Aman ... 0/13

Aqaba ... 8/21

Dead Sea ... 1/12

Jordan Valley ... 7/20

AMMAN:

Dr. Anwar Al Ashhab ... 602507

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayem ... 620115

Dr. Joseph Imb ... 770500

Dr. Mohammad Manna ... 741444

Firas pharmacy ... 661912

Al Asema pharmacy ... 778356

Al Asema pharmacy ... 670555

Natrouk pharmacy ... 623672

Al Salem pharmacy ... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945

Shamsan pharmacy ... 637660

REBID:

Dr. Mohammad Saeed ... (—)

Al Shamsa' pharmacy ... 273825

ZARQA:

Yesterday's high temperatures: Aman ... 10, Aqaba 18. Humidity readings: Aman 77 per cent, Aqaba 43 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Anwar Al Ashhab ... 602507

Dr. Abdul Hadi Tayem ... 620115

Dr. Joseph Imb ... 770500

Dr. Mohammad Manna ... 741444

Firas pharmacy ... 661912

Al Asema pharmacy ... 778356

Al Asema pharmacy ... 670555

Natrouk pharmacy ... 623672

Al Salem pharmacy ... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy ... 644945

Shamsan pharmacy ... 637660

REBID:

Dr. Mohammad Saeed ... (—)

Al Shamsa' pharmacy ... 273825

ZARQA:

Dr. Yousef Fadel ... (—)

Khalifeh pharmacy ... 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre ... 637111

Civil Defence Department ... 661111

Civil Defence Immediate ... 630341

Rescue Police ... 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade ... 391228

Blood Bank ... 775121

Highway Police ... 843402

Traffic Police ... 896390

Public Security Department ... 69021

Hotel Complaints ... 602800

Price Complaints ... 661176

Water and Sewerage ... 897467

Complaints ... 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) ... 121

Overseas Calls ... 010230

Central Aman Telephone ... 623101

Repairs ... 661101

Abdali Telephone Repairs ... 661101

Jordan Television ... 773111

Radio Jordan ... 774111

Water Authority ... 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority ... 815615

Electric Power Company ... 636381

RJ Flight Information ... 08-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport ... 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre ... \$1381/32

Khalifeh Maternity, J. Ann. ... 644281/6

Akhil Maternity, J. Ann. ... 642441/2

Jabal Aman Maternity ... 642362

Mathias, J. Aman ... 636140

Palestine, Shamsan ... 664171/4

Shamsan Hospital ... 669131

University Hospital ... 848485

Al-Musader Hospital ... 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali ... 666127/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali ... 664164/6

Italian, Al-Mulajreza ... 777101/3

Al-Bashir, J. Ashrafieh ... 775111/26

Army, Marja ... 891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital ... 602240/50

CHARITY BAZAAR: Deputing for Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan, Her Royal Highness Princess Rahma Bint Al Hassan Sunday opened a charity bazaar organised by Al Hussein Society for the Rehabilitation of the Physically Handicapped. Taking part in the bazaar, whose proceeds will go to the benefit of the physically handicapped, were 25 embassies. On display at the bazaar were traditional items and handicrafts made by the physically handicapped themselves.

The society was established in 1972 to provide training and rehabilitation services to the physically handicapped.



Liven Christmas with live trees from government

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordanians celebrating Christmas this year can buy Christmas trees from the Ministry of Agriculture's Range and Afforestation Department, according to Azzam Muheisen, director of the Forestry Department at the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Muheisen said that people can buy Christmas trees at the department's station in Kamaleh, Sweleh.

Mr. Muheisen appealed to the public to refrain from cutting down trees from forests or from along-side roads and streets.

He said that cutting down trees was forbidden by law and the practice runs contrary to the Kingdom's drive to green all parts of the country.

The ministry's nurseries produce millions of tree saplings each year and most of them are planted during Arbor Day celebrations, usually in January.

The Ministry of Agriculture usually distributes saplings free of charge or for nominal fees to government departments, schools, organisations, municipalities and individuals to be planted in the country in the winter season.



Manal Al Mulqi and her two children

Can Zionism not be racism?

Palestinians know more than the General Assembly

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Palestinian men and women deported from their homeland by the Israeli authorities have voiced their condemnation of a move on the part of the General Assembly to rescind its 1975 resolution that equates Zionism with racism.

The General Assembly's move, upon the U.S. president's request, "will be a foolish action and those voting for rescinding the resolution are people without conscience," said Manal Eid Al Mulqi, one of 139,000 married women living in the diaspora and seeking reunion with their husbands in the occupied territories.

Mrs. Al Mulqi said that she married Mahdi Al Mulqi during a visit to the West Bank town of Nablus in 1987 but the Israeli authorities forced her to leave the Arab homeland one year later although she had given birth to a baby girl.

Mrs. Al Mulqi said that the Israeli authorities had repeatedly asked her husband to divorce her and marry another woman living in the occupied Arab lands but he refused.

After severe pressure on the Israeli authorities from a number of circles, "I was allowed to live in Nablus for three months, but afterwards when they tried to catch me I escaped and lived incognito until I gave birth to a second child in September 1989," the woman said in an interview with the Jordan Times and Al Arab.

"When I was finally deported in September of 1990 I returned to Amman where I now live and where my husband visits me from time to time. But I need to live with my husband and children," she said.

She demanded to be reunited with her two children and her husband to lead a normal life.

Mahmoud Fannoun, 35, and one of 1,449 Palestinian men deported from the occupied territories, described his living away from his homeland "like a tree uprooted from the ground."

"I was deported in 1986 and was left stranded at Wadi Araba in Jordan where I was found by the Jordanian authorities," he said. The deportation came after speeding a number of years in detention without trial, Mr. Fannoun said.

Massoud Zueiter, 45, another deportee and father of six children said that he spent several years in a Nablus prison before he was deported to Lebanon in 1989. "I left my wife and children in the West Bank and I am not allowed to see them," Mr. Zueiter complained.

An injured boy who is being currently treated at one of Amman's hospitals told the Jordan Times that he was coming out of school with his mates "when one of the Israeli troops seized me and began beating me and accusing me of throwing stones on soldiers."

He said the soldier beat him and broke his legs and he was left without treatment, lying in one of the streets of Hebron, until then-

bers of his family came to save him.

According to Majed Milhem from the occupied territories' Research and Study Department the rate of illiteracy among Arabs under Israeli rule now stands at 14.4 per cent, compared with 4.3 per cent among the Israelis.

Dr. Milhem said that Israel is continuing a practice of closing down schools and universities at will and exercises all sorts of atrocities against the Arabs.

It is high time to pay income tax

AMMAN (Petra) — The Income Tax Department has issued a call to all citizens to settle their income tax obligations before the end of the year to avoid paying fines at the rate of 1.5 per cent on each month of delay afterwards.

The department's statement noted that those required to submit income statements during 1991 should do so before Dec. 31 to avoid paying other fines that range between two and 24 per cent of the total amount of taxes.

The statement said that those required by law to submit a statement outlining their income during the year were all those earning an annual income exceeding JD5,000 whether they were employees, businessmen, merchants and others.

Author wonders why Petra wonders remain unpublicised

By Nur Sati
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A French writer is currently in the country to write a script about the ancient Nabatean city of Petra, in southern Jordan. The script will be incorporated into a book about the rose-red city to be published in French and Arabic.

Anne Wade Minkowski, joining 11 other Arab and French writers and literary people in compiling the book, said each writer will write about an event that took place in Petra or about Petra itself. "But, the main idea," she said, "will be left up to the author."

The invitation to the authors was in collaboration with the French Cultural Centre in Jordan, and the Ministry of Tourism.

The writers were chosen in view of what they had already written. Most of their writings were fiction stories about archaeological sites but which took place in historical places, according to Mrs. Minkowski.

Mrs. Minkowski, who specialises in contemporary Arabic literature, said she would not reveal her story yet. But "now that I have visited the city, I think it is one of the wonders of the world," she said. "It is surprising though why Petra is not more well known

than it is. People know about Petra but they do not really know what it is. I myself did not know what it was so much to see."

The book is scheduled to be on the shelves by the end of 1992 or beginning 1993.

Mrs. Minkowski has translated a great deal of literary work from French into Arabic, such as the works of the Syrian poet Adoni who is "the greatest living Arabic poet."

"It made me happy that he is now well known in the French literary circles," she said.

Mrs. Minkowski also translated short stories by the Egyptian author, Yousef Idris, who passed away last year. In addition she also translated works by a Sudanese author and other poems from the 10th and 11th centuries. At present, the writer is translating Jibril Khalil Jibril's book "The Prophet" into French.

France's interest in the Nabatean city of Petra has increased recently as a three-member scientific team visited the site last month and spent two weeks studying the corrosion of the rocks at the "King's Tomb" to conduct tests, determine the causes and find solutions behind the rock corrosion.

"I think there is a growing interest by France in preserving universal cultural heritage," Mrs.

Minkowski told the Jordan Times. "France is quite active in this domain. I think if Petra is talked about enough and there are initiatives — such as this book — then people will be more aware. But so far, the public is not quite aware of what is going on," she added.

Literary speaking, Mrs. Minkowski said that 10 years ago the French literary people did not know much about Arabic literature but now since the public is opening up to Arabic works "it has gone well with the French public."

"They are discovering something new," she pointed out.

"We are trying now to bring Arab authors into France. This sort of scheme has a big impact on the public, it does a lot to make such literature more well known," Mrs. Minkowski said.

She said that the Gulf war did not really affect the public or the publishers in France because it did not last long enough. "At some points though, there was a tendency to postpone publishing. They (publishers) would say, 'wait and see how things turn out'. But it did not have a negative direct effect on Arabic literature," she said. "In France, people are eager to discover this world, for them it is relatively unknown, different and interesting."

Masri points to experts, researchers to reform basic education system

AMMAN (Petra) — Delegates from 12 Arab countries opened a five-day meeting in Amman to discuss the role of educational research centres in promoting basic education in the Arab World.

The conference organised by the Amman-based regional office of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in cooperation with the National Centre for Educational Research and Development, will focus on methods of research in basic education, priorities in the educational process, prospects for developing the appropriate mechanisms for imparting education and exchange of information resulting from research among Arab states.

In addressing the opening session, Jordan's representative said that the Kingdom was going ahead with plans for cooperation with Arab states on the one hand and the UNESCO offices on the other with a view to promoting education in general.

Munther Al Masri, who is also Ministry of Education secretary general said that education deepens concepts, enhances the national feelings for forging an Arab unity and promotes the spirit of democracy in the Arab society.

He said that the conference is designed to enrich the educational experiments in the Arab World.

This conference is also aimed at enabling the Arab states to spread education and achieve the target of the 1990s: "Providing Education for all by the year 2000," as was decided at the U.N.-sponsored educational conference in Thailand in March of 1990, Dr. Masri pointed out.

He said Jordan was closely cooperating with UNESCO and the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation (ALESCO) in order to achieve the goals of education for all by the end of the present century and to introduce changes designed to improve the quality of education for children.

"In Jordan's view," Dr. Masri said, "special emphasis should be laid on the role of experts and researchers in Jordanian universities which can help the ministries of education in the Arab World boost basic education at schools."

Dr. Masri criticised the existing system of the Arab World as lacking the basic educational information and failing to adopt national educational policies based on scientific research.

UNESCO representative, Abdul Qader Al Atrash, said the Arab World was facing a real challenge represented in its ability to train its human resources in a manner that would help implement the requirements of sustainable development by utilisation of modern technology.

Dr. Atrash said UNESCO's educational innovation programme aims at bolstering basic

Writer tries to bridge Mideast present, past gap

By Serene Halasa
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The term "looking at the other side of the coin" is a term apt to describe a new book on the Middle East that examines the attitudes of Arabs towards the West since the turn of this century.

According to the British writer Gerald Butt, a long time BBC correspondent in the Middle East, the book looks at the different perceptions Arabs have of the West, especially regarding previous political decisions that have and continue to affect the lives of people in the region to this date.

"I will take important historical events and build on them," said Mr. Butt who is currently on a visit to Jordan to collect data and interview people for the book. "And I will also see how these events are taught to children and how ideas are shaped in their minds in order to understand how they are and why they think in that certain way."

Mr. Butt explained that, for example, the 1917 Sykes-Picot agreement that divided greater Syria between the French and the British has had political repercussions with negative fallout shaping the course of events in the Middle East today. He mentioned the most catastrophic to be

the Gulf crisis and the war that followed.

For many, Mr. Butt believes, this treaty meant betrayal and denial of Arab rights. He concludes that although the majority of the Arab World has forgotten the basis of many consecutive treaties that further divided the Arab World and created the borders seen on today's Middle East map, the feeling of betrayal and denial has transferred itself from one generation to the other.

"I will try to show how the accumulation of attitudes in the past have contributed to making up the attitudes we see today in this region," Mr. Butt said.

The latest events in the region, especially the Gulf war, have prompted Mr. Butt to launch this project. Having visited Syria and Jordan, he will proceed to Egypt, Lebanon, the West Bank and probably Algeria for the same task of collecting information and interviewing people.

"It's amazing to see that there is so much traffic between East and West, yet there is still a big gap in perceptions on both sides," he said. "So instead of looking at how the West sees and stereotypes Arabs, I want to look into how Arabs react to their stereotypes in the West."

Mr. Butt said that during the Gulf crisis there was a great deal of misunderstanding of the Arabs and "how Arabs think."

Having lived a considerable time in this region and having been exposed to the two cultures, Mr. Butt described the type of coverage during the crisis and the war as "superficial."

The coverage that gave background to events taking shape at the present time was minimal, especially coverage on the reasons behind the sense of anger and frustration among Arabs," Mr. Butt said. "This limited scope of coverage contributed to less understanding in the West of events in this region."

Even after the end of the Gulf war and the subsequent events "there was no great sense of understanding by the West of this region."

"The West always dwelt on the notion that they knew best how the region should be run and this attitude has been there since the start of this century and will most probably stay that way till the end of the century," Mr. Butt said.

In his book, Mr. Butt will also attempt to look at the different aspirations Arabs pin on their leaders.

"I will look into the leaderships in the Arab World, what the Arab masses expect of them and what the West wants them to be and to do," Mr. Butt said.

The book is scheduled to be finished in 1993; it will be published by Harper Collins.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Bahrain

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday sent a cable to Bahraini leaders, Sheikh Issa Ben Sulaiman Al Khalifa, congratulating him on his country's national day. The King wished Sheikh Issa continued good health and happiness and the Bahraini people further progress and prosperity.

Ambassador-designate presents credentials

AMMAN (Petra) — Foreign Minister Kamel Abu Jaber Sunday received copies of the credentials of the newly appointed Turkish ambassador to Jordan, Mehmet Ertimishlek.

Commission denounces Israeli practices

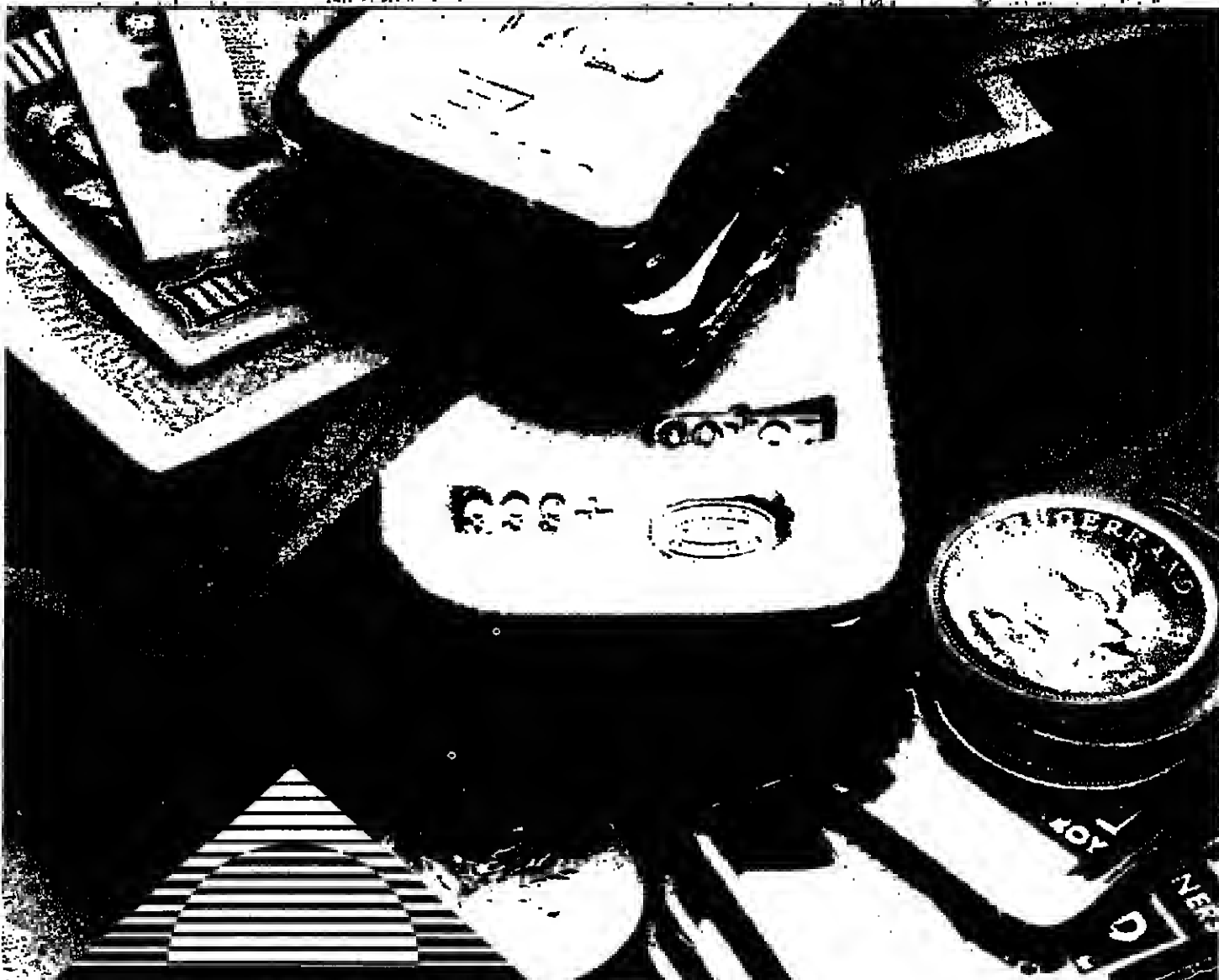
AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs Sunday denounced the terrorist Israeli practices in Jerusalem and the escalation of these measures at this particular time is aimed at obstructing the peace march, and shorting it. A spokesman for the commission also said that the Israeli campaign coincided with the Dakar Islamic conference, which was held last week. He called on the Islamic countries, which took part in the conference to shoulder their religious, political and humanitarian responsibilities towards Jerusalem and the other Islamic places in the occupied Arab territories.

Training symposium for special teaching ends

AMMAN (Petra) — A week-long regional training symposium on children with special needs in the ordinary classes concluded here Sunday and adopted a recommendation calling for preparing flexible and adjustable curricula. Participants called for reconsidering the methods used in training teachers in the participating countries. At the end of their meetings, they recommended that the educational package prepared by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), to improve the teachers' performance, be adopted and applied. Taking part in the symposium were Jordan, Bahrain, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and Oman.

Jordan participates in Arab legal talks

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is taking part in the Arab League legal committee meeting which is due to open in Cairo Monday. Judge Rifaat Shammout, head of the Higher Court of Justice in Amman said the committee would discuss a number of draft agreements among Arab states including matters related to the status of Palestinian refugees now living in Arab countries and an agreement between the Arab League and the Islamic Bank as well as the declaration of pan-Arab principles on countering air piracy. Mr. Shammout, who is heading the Jordanian delegation to the four-day meetings, made the statement shortly before his departure for the Egyptian capital.



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Equality for women

THE SYMPOSIUM, women in employment and development of the Arab World, being launched today is a timely endeavour that calls for the full participation of all women and men dedicated to the cause of eliminating all remaining vestiges of discrimination between men and women. The Pan-Arab Association for Women in Development and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which are jointly organising the conference, deserve to be commended for bringing to the fore a pressing issue that has left women's role in development neglected for too long. In this vein, there is no escape from the conclusion that women's contributions to their societies, be they economic, cultural or social, can never be enhanced to their full extent and dimensions without the eradication of all traces of negative discrimination against women. In this context it is comforting to note that the government is on the verge of ratifying the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, which was adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December of 1979 and went into force in September 1981. In its preamble paragraph, this convention notes that the state parties to the international covenants on human rights have entered into a clear obligation to ensure and accord equal rights to men and women in order to enable both to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. The same section of the convention reaffirms that discrimination against women violates the principle of equality between human beings and deprives women of the opportunities to participate on equal terms and footing with men in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their respective countries. For attaining such goals, the state parties are called upon to "adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women." It even goes further when it requires the state parties "to modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices... and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women."

In its cumulative sense this human rights instrument in effect calls for affirmative action in order to elevate the role and participation of women in the development of their countries to a position of equality. Translated into more concrete manifestations, Jordan, in which women have over the years gained a great deal of equality, would be treaty obligated to take specific affirmative actions in order to increase the participation of women in the economic as well as political, social and cultural life of their country. In other words, the policy of the Kingdom in this regard need to be adopted and pursued with the clear purpose of having more qualified women serving in all sectors of development. Granted that few countries have attained the ideal level of women participation, that in itself does not excuse developing countries such as Jordan from aspiring effectively to achieve such an ambitious objective.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily Sunday described as a big defeat to the Arabs and Muslims the resolutions issued by the Islamic summit in Dakar. The leaders who met in Dakar have decided to maintain the genocide of the Iraqi people and to prevent the Islamic nations from launching holy wars against the aggressors who do not conceal their hatred of Arabs and Muslims and who are greedy enough to launch wars to satisfy their desires, the paper said. It is regrettable to see resolutions at an Islamic summit being bought with Islamic and Arab money for the sake of offering service to the aggressors who launched war on Iraq, continue to oppress the Palestinians and pursue their schemes to loot Arab and Islamic nations' wealth, the paper said. The Islamic leaders in Dakar have thus decided to dispose of the Iraqi people through continued starvation and embargo, to ignore the cries of the Palestinians now under repression in the occupied territories and to offer service to the Western nations, said the paper. The Muslim leaders in Dakar justified their call for continued sanctions on Iraq by claiming that Baghdad should comply with the will of the world community and implement U.N. Security Council resolutions which it has already done, the paper said. It said that Iraq will one day rise again and its people will rebuild all that had been destroyed in the raids, but, said the paper, those Muslims and Arab leaders who took shameful decisions can by no means get rid of the shame which remains as a stigma over all their lives.

Al Dastour accused Israel of continued actions designed to abort the peace talks. Apart from the obstacles laid in the path of the negotiations in Washington, the Israelis are stepping up their repressive campaigns against the Palestinian people and allowing the settlers to occupy Arab homes while continuing a drive to evict Arabs from their homeland and violating the Palestinian human rights, said the paper. The new wave of terrorism against the Palestinians, the escalation of settlers' activities and the inhuman treatment of Arab youth in Israeli jails stand out as a proof of Israel's evil intentions while the continuing settlement programmes in Arab lands clearly expose Israel's determination to foil attempts to achieve a durable settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestine problem, the paper said. Israel's action coupled with its leaders' intransigence at the Washington peace talks, said the paper, clearly indicate Israel's intentions that it does not wish to live in peace with its Arab neighbours, neither that it will ever abandon the occupied Arab lands.

Weekly Political Pulse

First things first

ISRAEL is pressing ahead for the repeal of the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism and is attempting to make this issue part and parcel of the negotiating process on peace in the Middle East. Washington and other Western powers are also launching similar campaigns in order to use their words, to enhance the chances of the ongoing peace talks between Israel and the Arab parties. The timing of this well-orchestrated effort to delete from the annals of the United Nations any reference to Zionism as a form of racism is of course well chosen with the collapse of the communist order in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union itself. This prompted the former Soviet Foreign Minister Boris Pankin, during the U.N. General Assembly debates this year, to say that the U.N. "should once and for all leave behind the legacy of the ice age like the abnoxious resolution equating Zionism to racism."

Well, the significance of the timing of the mushrooming efforts to reverse that decision of the United Nations lies in the fact that among the staunch supporters of the Nov. 10, 1975 resolution were the former Warsaw Pact countries, including of course the Soviet Union. Now that pact is dead and done with, the stage is set for revoking many of the policy and legal decisions that they once voted for. Paramount among such decisions is of course the resolution equating Zionism with racism.

U.S. State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler told the press last week: "To equate Zionism with the intolerable sins of racism is to twist history. By repealing this resolution unconditionally," she continued to say, "the United Nations will enhance its credibility and serve the cause of peace." The most objectionable part of Mrs. Tutwiler's statement was her call for unconditional repeal of the resolution, that is if one wants to be also credible and sensible.

One can sympathise with all those voices calling for annulling the controversial decision if they coope their concern for Israel's reputation with an equal interest in the root causes for the adoption of the resolution in the first place. If one looks, for example, at Tel Aviv's record of human rights and their record on the ratification of relevant international instruments on human rights, including those that the Western civilisation had articulated, one would readily notice that Israel's record leaves much to be desired and therefore the way to address the complained about resolution is to rectify first this dismal Israeli record. Otherwise, the friends of Israel would be putting the cart before the horse. I, for one, would have no difficulty entertaining a "deal" envisaging the rescinding of the resolution in question in return for Israel's adherence to all the major international covenants or treaties on human rights in addition to improving its human rights record as reported not only in Arab human rights journals but also in international, renowned human rights periodicals, such as the one compiled and published by Amnesty International.

If Israel and its ardent supporters truly wish to do something positive about the 1975 resolution, let them begin by having Israel ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which came into force in 1976 and is signed and ratified by the entire Western world, scores of former Eastern bloc countries and many dozens of developing countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. The only exception is offered by the U.S. which has yet to ratify that particular international instrument in spite of repeated protestations that it is considering seriously such a belated move.

From the U.N. point of view and from the international law perspective, the ratification of such an instrument is at least a theoretical test of whether a certain country rejects racism in all

its forms and whether it abhors the application and policy of racism in all its manifestations.

There is also the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which is nearly universally ratified with the exception of very few countries, including Israel. On the long list of international treaties pertaining to human rights where Israel's name is notably absent are the following: The International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid, the Convention on the Non-applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Convention on Consent to Marriage, Minimum Age of Marriage and Registration of Marriages, the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, and other related conventions. As can be seen, Israel's record vis-a-vis many highly important treaties is anything but encouraging. Would it not be more fair to ask of Israel to change its stance on such internationally binding instruments, in word and deed, before considering the repeal of the troubling stigma attached to it because of the resolution equating Zionism with racism?

There is no doubt that in the context of the ongoing peace negotiations between the Arab side and Israel such an issue can be put on the negotiating table. If there is genuine peace between the two sides, all such peering issues stand to be rectified to the satisfaction of all the parties. But before peace is attained and prior to Israel's decision to reverse its negative position on the relevant internationally-binding human rights treaties, it would be premature and unfair to even attempt to rescind the resolution on Zionism equating racism.

LETTERS

It's time for peace!

To the Editor:

PEACE conference, peace talks, peace initiative, peace efforts. We've got used to hearing these words over and over and thought that they are the problem solvers of the dilemma of the oppressed people who suffer greatly because of occupation. Now, as we watch the convening of the long-awaited peace conference, we realise that not only holding of the conference, but also having the will, the honest will, to live in peace and mutual understanding are equally needed.

Arabs living under the cruel, brutal occupation exercised by Israelis in the Golan Heights, South Lebanon and the holy land of Palestine, had enough suffering and witnessed more bloodshed than anyone would take. Yet they are ready to try to forgive and live in peace.

Although the Israeli aggressors have the chance to live peacefully with their Arab neighbours (as they used to claim every time they had the chance to pretend to want peace) they ignored everyone and came to the Washington peace conference five days late. The other participating parties did not mind and were forgiving by not raising the subject so that the peace process can go on as smoothly as possible. The Israeli attitude is not as positive though. They still refuse to discuss essential matters and anyone who sees the Israeli delegation on TV feels that they are acting as if they were some donors giving charity, which can never be true in any way. They still seem reluctant and sound aggressive and they are not trying to build any communication channels between them and the Arabs.

Sitting in the same room to the same table is a successful first step. Everyone just hopes it will not be the last and that peace will eventually prevail.

Suleima Kayyali,
Amman.

Giving with love and a smile

To the Editor:

Its Christmas! Time to give. Nazek Bitar is a woman who teaches just that. Christmas is also the time for bazaars and buying gifts, many times for children who sometimes have everything.

Whatever charity organisation the bazaar represents, you will find her there selling UNICEF cards and gifts. Always with a smile, always guiding you to buy at least one item like a good saleswoman; you think she is selling "the jewels of the world." No, what she is selling is "love of the children of this world;" she is selling UNICEF gift items from children to children.

Thank you Nazek Bitar for teaching our children of Jordan to give, give with love and a smile.

Nelly S. Khomry,
P.O. Box 925072,
Amman, Jordan.

Don't spoil the desert

To the Editor:

THE Nov. 5 Jordan Times article "Race across desert to promote tourist sites," saddened me. In America we are now "racing" to protect our deserts (what is left of them) from car races and rallies like this.

I live in the desert in California and so much damage has been done to the East Mojave Desert (with its fragile plant and animal ecosystems) by car and motorcycle rallies that the Bureau of Land Management has had to stop them.

In the Anza-Borrego Desert, not only has vehicular "trail-riding" and racing destroyed plant and animal life, but precious archaeological sites have been plundered.

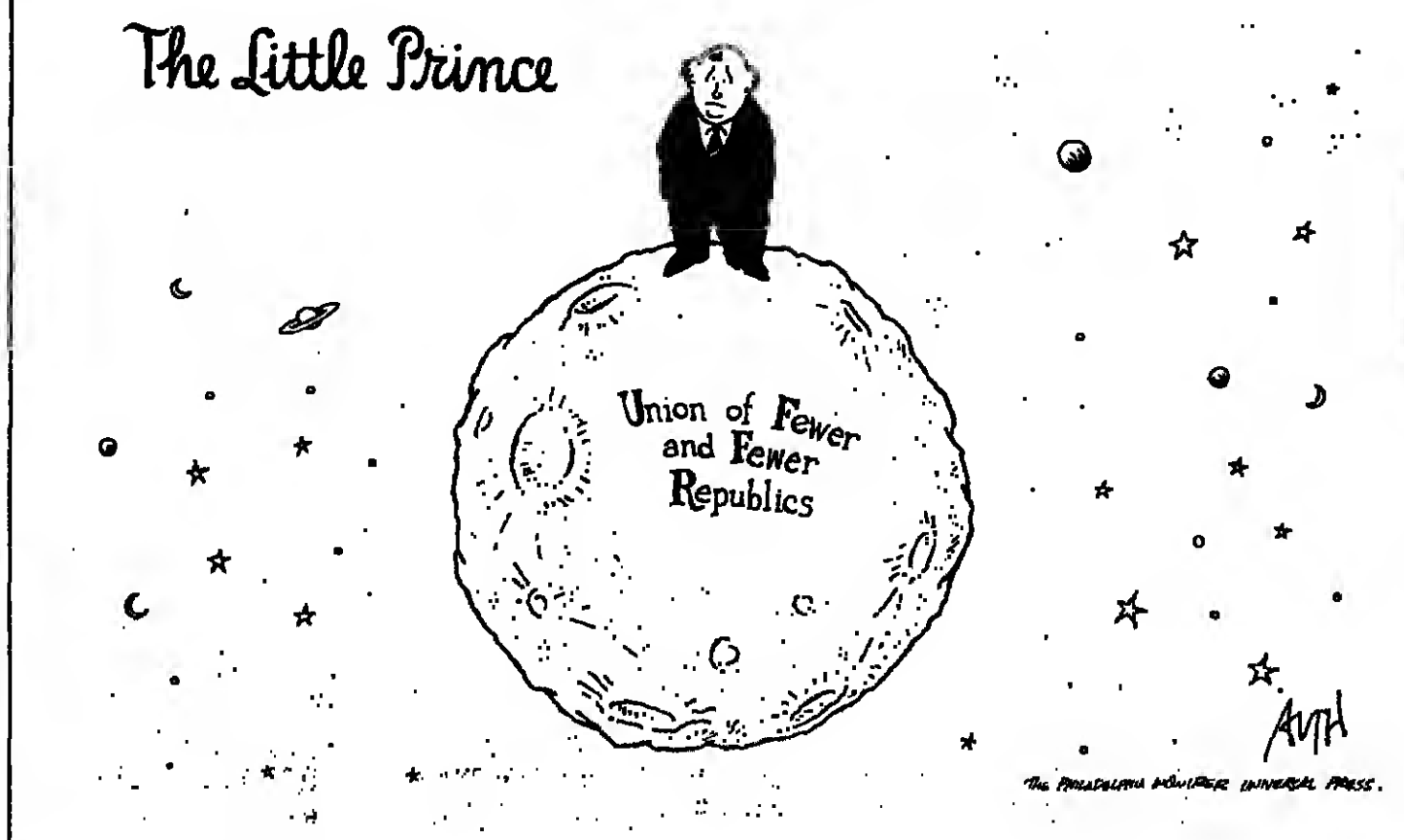
I hope this does not happen to Jordan. Jordan's unspoiled desert and unique historic and archaeological sites are the main reasons tourists come here for.

I hope that in promoting tourism and using these sites you will not unwittingly destroy them.

Chris Martin,
P.O. Box 1724, Niland California,
Zip Code 92257.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

The Little Prince



More flags, fewer illusions in East Europe

By Douglas Hamilton
Reuters

VIENNA — The old Soviet Union is gone. Yugoslavia has broken apart. Unfamiliar flags of newly-independent nations encircle Eastern Europe as it ends a tough year, signalling an even less certain future.

Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Moldova are re-emerging from the pages of Balkan history. Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia are breaking loose from the Soviet empire. Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania are already sovereign.

"Balkanisation" — a 1914 label for backward little nation states which ignited wars — is again a topical term.

Europe's history in 1991 was stained by Vukovar, the shell-shocked ruin of a city on the Danube between warring Croats and Serbs and by Dobrovnik, the Adriatic jewel used as target practice for Yugoslav army Howitzers.

It was the worst fighting on the continent since 1945.

Unless it stops and U.N. peacekeeping troops are deployed, analysts fear Bosnia-Herzegovina may be sucked in what one Western minister called a "war without winners."

"I do not rule out a general civil war," said Yugoslav Prime Minister Ante Markovic this month, as the conflict raged just a few hours drive from Venice and Vienna.

Yugoslavia's drama apart, 1992 looks like being another year of grind for this region of nearly 125 million people struggling to achieve stability and growth.

After joyously shedding communism, the peoples of Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Albania learned there was no such thing as instant democracy and prosperity.

From Gdansk to Bucharest, shops filled up with consumer goods, but prices rocketed and

joblessness climbed as the painful, chaotic withdrawal from central planning continued.

To the dismay of well-wishers, an ingrained "old mentality" of law expectations has shackled initiative, while uncashed nationalism has flourished like a weed.

"New states on the fringes of Central Europe will be rivals for Western help. They may also harbour trouble, in the shape of ethnic millions misplaced behind World War II borders."

New states on the fringes of central Europe will be rivals for Western help. They may also harbour trouble, in the shape of ethnic millions misplaced behind World War II borders.

Hungarian political scientist Laszlo Keri believes East European governments will press border issues in an irredentist free-for-all that will be hard to control.

"They will be very Slovakian, very Romanian, very Polish, very Hungarian, very Serbian and very Bulgarian. This will be the only issue (to draw) considerable support," Mr. Keri said.

With the United States starting a presidential race, and the European Community preoccupied with forging unity of its own, self-reliant nationalism can be a positive force.

"It is clear for the time being that the West will not make an economic move for this region as large as the Marshall Plan," said Hungarian foreign policy aide Gyula Kodolanyi.

Hungarians must rely above all "on our own political determination and will," he said.

As 1991 draws to a close, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was raised the frightening spectre of the Soviet Union dissolving into "a Yugoslavia, with nukes thrown in."

Nationalist strains, albeit of less violent potential, also challenge Czechoslovakia, where Slovak separatism and the cost of economic change have increased anxieties. Talks on the Czech-Slovak split are deadlocked, threatening to warp elections due next June.

"It is an absolute illusion to talk about a peaceful and civilised separation, since personal interests will be in the game," said Frantisek Sebej, a moderate Slovak politician.

Europe, like an old pullover, could unravel if a thread is pulled, Mr. Sebej commented. "There is one big unknown — the silent majority," he added. "Either they are decent people or... demoralised, lazy and silly people. And then we have bad luck."

In Poland, voters already seem disillusioned with democracy. In October, fewer than half voted in the first free general election since World War II.

A deeply fragmented parliament emerged, creating the risk of chronic instability and raising doubts over the resolve of future governments to stick to harsh economic medicine.

Yet, if they can cooperate in a free trade zone, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia are seen as East Europe's strongest growth prospects. With peace in Yugoslavia, well-organised Slovenia, and Croatia could join, making a market of 77 million.

But Romania, Bulgaria and Albania, with 36 million people in total, all suffer from political instability.

Here, the flavour of Balkan strife remains strong.

Romania's Prime Minister Theodor Stolojan thinks it could take up to seven years to erect the legal and institutional structures

needed for a new economic system.

Another tough task, he said, was "the eradication of communism... a true cancer of society."

For Mr. Stolojan, who took office in September after rioting miners forced out Petre Roman, the main job in 1992 will be consolidating a frail democracy.

Analysts believe Romanians face a series of coalitions over the coming years, and that their fate will also be linked to ethnic Romanians next door in the Soviet Union.

Elections last October gave economically strapped Bulgaria its first non-communist government. But, here too, analysts see fragmentation next year, worsened by ethnic Turkish discontent.

"1992 will be a year of sharpening conflicts in the ruling non-communist union of democratic forces, which will lead to a new split," predicted leading sociologist Tsvetozar Tomov.

"1992 will be a year of sharpening conflicts in the ruling non-communist union of democratic forces, which will lead to a new split."

In Albania, a horse-and-cart economy in a country endowed with resources, 1991 ended with 40 dead in a stampede for bread and troops doling out loaves to prevent mob rule.

The governing coalition of democrats and ex-communists had fallen apart, and young politicians who united to sweep four decades of Stalinism aside just a year before fell to squabbling amongst themselves.

Jordan will not negotiate on behalf of the Palestinians

By Allison Kaplan
The Jerusalem Post

WASHINGTON — Perhaps it is because of his profession that Dr. Abdul Salam Majali chooses a colorful medical metaphor to describe what he believes would ensue if bilateral talks with Israel do not go at the slow and careful pace that Jordan advocates.

"I think if we push things down our throats, everybody will have indigestion," Dr. Majali said in an interview Friday, settled in his hotel suite wearing traditional dress and his trademark black-rimmed glasses.

That is why Dr. Majali said he refuses to have the kind of casual hotel-room meetings and telephone conversations with Israeli negotiators that Israel has asked him for, and it is why he says it is still too early to move the ongoing bilateral negotiations to the Middle East, as Israel would like.

But the chief negotiator for Jordan in the bilateral talks was personally taking what some would view as a step toward normalisation between Israel and Jordan by sitting in the Willard Hotel here, discussing the peace process with two Israeli reporters.

As he described his position on the negotiations, the 66-year-old doctor seemed to be looking for Israeli understanding of the inability of a Jordanian leader to make any moves to press the Palestinians to agree to negotiate substantive issues as a team, rather than in separate rooms.

"I cannot and I will not at all

negotiate on the Palestinians' behalf," he said, leaning forward for emphasis. "I have vital interests with them, but I will not speak on their behalf."

Making frequent references to the "rejectionist" forces in the Arab World, Dr. Majali said that any move he made that appears to subsume the Palestinians threatens not only the peace process but the very lives of Jordanians who appear to be negotiating the Palestinian national identity, and listed those who had died for appearing to make this attempt.

"I lost my cousin because of this, because Hizba Majali was trying to have some negotiations for the Palestinian side. King Abdullah lost his life, Wasfi Tall lost his life. I am not going to lose my life."

Dr. Majali said that he has tried to bring that point across to Israeli negotiator Elyakim Rubinstein, while sitting on the couch in the State Department corridor, that only the Palestinians can make concessions to Israel, and therefore, Israel must accept their desire to solidly split the Jordanian-Palestinian representation into two tracks.

"I tried to explain it to him. I said that if I go and sit with him alone, even my delegation thinks I'm making a secret deal. So I am betraying the cause. I lose my credibility with my own people. Is that what you want?" Mr. Majali sighed. "Sometimes, I think that's what he wants."

Because of the corridor diplomacy among the Israeli, Jordanian and Palestinian delega-

tions over the issue of meeting rooms, the talks became three days of marathon sessions for Mr. Majali on a sofa in the State Department with Mr. Rubinstein and Palestinian negotiator Haider Abdul Shafi — not easy for any 66-year-old to take.

"The place is not comfortable," he said, "but I am one of the people who thinks that these three days were not wasted. I think it is a great step forward that people sat together in front of everybody, not with closed doors. In fact, the idea of sitting on that couch is a million times better than sitting across from each other. Because then, you would be talking at each other and there is a lot of difference between talking at each other and with each other."

As for the delegates, who have been mingling in the corridor around the three negotiators drinking endless cups of coffee, the human interaction is valuable, he said. "The first time they met, they were not smiling, but the second time they smile after they see somebody because you recognise them. That in itself, I believe, is a great step."

He said that "as a man of science" he cannot understand what he interpreted as a reversal of Mr. Rubinstein's agreement in Madrid to continue talks along two tracks dealing with Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Jordanian issues.

While he admitted that there was a great deal of overlap on the issues, he said the Jordanians and Palestinians would have out issues of health, education, cur-

rency and water between themselves, a process that he said would also be a "headache."

"I told him flatly, when he was pushing me to sit there and to be with them, I said look here, I have more difficulty discussing issues with the Palestinians than with you because there are more details there, especially in the future, that will have an effect on us — if we really are talking of confederation."

He indicated, however, that in his view the one has come for the U.S. to intervene and make a decision about the structure of the bilateral meetings, making the analogy to a marriage counselor working out issues between a couple who cannot agree.

American mediation, after all, should be welcome for the Israelis since "we believe, and history proves it, that the Americans are on your side all the time — or 99 per cent of the time."

The U.S. intervention is setting the venue of Washington for this round of bilateral talks was vital since the two sides could not reach agreement, he said.

While Jordan does not rule out moving to the Middle East at some point during the negotiations, the time has not yet come to move to a Middle East venue — even if that location is a place like Cyprus, and not Israel and Jordan.

"I feel they insist we go to that area, we will be under the media spotlight and increased pressure. If you are in Cyprus or in Egypt, everyone in the street becomes more interested, and if it goes, it

goes to the media, the rejectionists on both sides and so on. Already people tell us if you go to a negotiation with the Israelis they will never ever give you anything — don't waste your time. And now they are being proven right because here we have been 10 days and got nothing, not a sign. If we go there, it becomes worse."

But if there is concrete progress in the talks and "the rejectionists lose their stand, then we could be in the area."

Dr. Majali's main complaint with Mr. Rubinstein and the Israelis in general was that they are too "short sighted." They should not look at points like venue or structure of the talks and instead look at what they can gain he said.

In his opinion, the vision of peace should motivate the Israelis to compromise on procedural points.

"These negotiations will end like what the Egyptians had. These negotiations are to be finalised and crystallised with the peace — proper peace — recognition openness."

"When in the long run, when you think of recognition of the Palestinians, solving this problem, you are going to have the recognition of all of the Arab states, all the Third World, all the Muslim world, you are going to have the markets opened. And you know the capabilities of the Israelis here in the United States. Yes are a small minority, but you have a lot of influence. So... once the door is open the influence is there. One has to look ahead."

Bahrain: A rich history

By Florence Duyse

BAHRAIN, Which means "the two seas" is an archipelago of 33 islands, the largest of which gives its name to the state. The opening of the causeway which links Bahrain to Saudi Arabia in 1986 means that Bahrain is no longer an island, in the true sense of the word.

A great many things are changing in these islands of the Arabian Gulf. Bahrain has enjoyed prosperity for thousands of years. It is this past that holds the respect of the Bahrainis and, according to the Prime Minister, Sheikh Khalifa Bin Salman Al Khalifa, well equips them to face the future with full wisdom and enthusiasm. History has handed down its inheritance. The future holds many challenges in store.

While Europe and North America were still firmly in the grip of the Ice Age, the land, known today as Bahrain, was enjoying a temperate climate

somewhat similar to that of modern Greece. At that time, sea level was about 100 metres below that of today, and it is almost certain that Bahrain was once before connected to the mainland, and remained so until around 6000 B.C.

The Epic of Gilgamesh, which is known to us through fragments of Sumerian script, describes Dilmun — Bahrain of today — as a kind of Elysium or paradise where eternal happiness reigned. (The likeness, in Alabaster, of the hero Gilgamesh can be seen in the Louvre Museum, Paris). There are also the copper artifacts, discovered in the north of the island, on the site of the temple of Babar near the village bearing the same name, and which have led archaeologists to believe that, in these regions, there were intense trading activities in copper from Oman and the Indus Valley.

Several temples unearthed and excavated, the discovery of the

highest prehistoric burial ground in the world (at least 100,000 restored, numerous ancient civilisations, and countless mysteries. Museums and exhibitions strive to cast some light on so many different forms of evidence from the past. The Bahrain National Museum was established in 1986.

This complex, which consists of three buildings, contain four departments: ethnography, archaeology, natural history, and a documentation centre devoted to the site of the prehistoric burial ground. A number of rooms are devoted to the Heritage Centre in which the visitor can view reconstructed scenes depicting everyday life. This is a tribute to an ancient culture which has retained a deep respect for both its craftsmanship and traditions, at the same time, combining the lessons and experience learned from them with the means and methods of the modern world — Bahrain Today.

Cabinet poised to win vote

(Continued from page 1)

poverty, organisation, unemployment and basic services as well as the continuing international sanctions against Iraq and Amman's relations with the Gulf Arab states.

Parliamentary observers said that it was clear that those deputies who preseted demands to the government despite their criticism of some of the policies of the executive branch were definite "yes" voters while the position of some others who criticised the government remained unclear since they stopped short of indicating their choice.

The basis on which the deputies aired their comments and adopted positions vis-a-vis the government of Sharif Zeid was the speech made by His Majesty King Hussein on Dec. 1, opening the regular session of Parliament.

Under constitutional provisions, the King's address was adopted as the government's policy statement.

Deputy Faisal Beo Jazi (Southern Bedouins) of the National Bloc was the first speaker on the floor Sunday. He extended total support for the government and called on the cabinet to grant a special amnesty for prisoners.

Mr. Ben Jazi also referred to the strain in Jordan's ties with the Gulf Arab states and expressed hope that "the doors between us and our neighbours will open soon."

Deputy Hosseio Mjalli (Jerash), a lawyer and former head of the Jordan Bar Association, said he was withholding confidence in the government because he opposed the ongoing Middle East peace process.

The pan-Arab nationalist Mjalli characterised the Arab-Israeli conflict as based on "existence" not borders and asserted that the Arabs will have to accept dictated solutions from the U.S. and Israel.

"Future generations will not condone the loss of Jerusalem and this humiliating surrender," he said.

In a harsh-hitting speech, Deputy Fares Nabulsi (Amman) of the Democratic Bloc criticised the composition of the Sharif Zeid cabinet and accused some of the ministers — without naming them — of hypocrisy adding that they had contributed to strains in relations between the executive and legislative authorities and had rejected government policies in the past.

Referring to the fact that the Sharif Zeid government was the third to assume office this year and that limited cabinet reshuffles had also been frequent, Mr. Nabulsi also assailed the "quick changes in government which have paralysed the administrative system."

The Amman deputy also questioned the agreement that Jordan reached with international agencies to manage the Kingdom's economic problems.

Mr. Nabulsi said he respected the integrity and honesty of Sharif Zeid, but did not have such sentiments towards "some" of the ministers.

He also accused unidentified members of parliament of seeking power through ministerial posts.

Deputy Mtair Bostajji (Karak), who addressed the

House on behalf of the six-member Independent Islamic Bloc, praised Jordan's democratisation process and indicated a "yes" vote.

"Democracy means responsible behaviour and a way of life," he said. "Let us work together against anything that will harm our homeland and values and to respect the views of others..."

The King's speech i.e. the government policy statement has made clear Jordan's commitment to the principled stands of Jordanians and Palestinians towards solving the Palestinian problem and "we ask the government to remain committed to these principles," Mr. Bostajji said.

He called for continued support for upgrading the standards of the Armed Forces and increased care for the needs of the members of the forces.

The deputy called on the government to intensify its efforts to address the economic problems and seek solutions to the unemployment problem through expanding development projects.

Irbid Deputy Deeb Marji of the Democratic Bloc described the government policy statement as positive and said it included "essential elements in the internal as well as external spheres."

Dr. Marji laid out a series of demands from the government, including solutions to unemployment and evenly distributed development assistance to all areas of the Kingdom.

He also called for new policies to govern prices, housing, social welfare, medical specialisations and care for the disabled, efforts to address the problem of poverty and administrative reforms.

Salim Zoubi of Irbid, who resigned from the government of Taher Masi in October citing opposition to the peace talks, said Jordan was facing a "challenge to its survival."

Mr. Zoubi, also of the Democratic Bloc, said Jordan was duty-bound to accept the "choice of the people because of its geographical location and its realities."

He supported the government's programme to make the 1990s a decade of educational reform and called on the executive authority to guide the affairs of private universities in the Kingdom.

Spearheading calls for a dedicated Jordanian government effort to lift the embargo on Iraq, imposed by the United Nations Security Council after the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, was Mohammad Abu Oleim (Madra), a member of the 17-member Constitution Bloc which has four deputies in the Sharif Zeid cabinet.

"We are distressed and in pain to witness Iraqi children, women and the elderly starve to death," said Dr. Abu Oleim. "We call on our government to pursue its efforts on the Arab, Islamic and regional as well as international scenes to end the sanctions against Iraq," he said.

Suleiman Arar (Maan), a former minister and House speaker who now heads the National Bloc of 16 deputies which is also represented in the Sharif Zeid government, said: "We denounce the revengeful attitude which the United States has adopted against Iraq and covered in a United Nations disguise."

"We demand that the government press on with the demand of lifting the embargo, which is a vengeful act against the Arab Nation and aims at serving the Zionist-American designs," said Mr. Arar.

Nader Thuheirat, National Bloc, underlined the need for increased cooperation and interaction between the government and parliament to implement programmes designed to improve the standard of living and urged solutions to unemployment and soaring prices.

Mr. Thuheirat, who represents the Jordan Valley, gave an added importance to the agricultural sector in Jordan and called for an all-out government effort to assist this sector.

Mr. Thuheirat urged increased support for the agricultural sector through establishing parallel markets and offering interest-free loans and improved seeds to farmers as well as setting up plants to manufacture fertilisers and agriculture equipment.

He said the government should also exert efforts to find new markets for Jordanian produce.

In conclusion, Mr. Thuheirat said he was voting confidence in Sharif Zeid's government since

his very appointment as prime minister was a sign of confidence from the King and noted that Sharif Zeid had served as interim prime minister for eight months in 1989, leading the country to its first general elections in 22 years.

Nayef Abu Tayyeh (southern Bedouins) made a short speech endorsing the government policy statement and casting his vote of confidence.

Mohammad Fares Tarawneh (Karak), who like Mr. Zoubi resigned from the Masi government in October citing the same reasons, said any discussion of the government's economic programme would be a discussion of the draft budget for 1992 which was presented to the House last week.

The draft budget, which incorporates all the elements of the economic programme, is under review by the House Finance Committee.

On the political front, Mr. Tarawneh described Jordan's strength as deriving from the "democratic path it has chosen."

Mr. Tarawneh said he understood the pressures that Jordan was under and the Kingdom's

approach to the peace talks with Israel, but he could not support the negotiations because of his personal convictions.

Observers expected Mr. Tarawneh to abstain in Monday's voting, which will come after speeches by 10 more deputies and Sharif Zeid's reply to the House.

Iraqi Kurds

(Continued from page 1)

which is under effective control of the front's eight political parties, each backed by its own guerrilla army.

Kurdish sources say that international parliamentarians will be invited to observe the election.

Autonomy for Kurdistan is expected to be the dominant issue.

Mr. Barzani brought a draft autonomy agreement back from Baghdad in mid-August. Mr. Talahani regularly attacks the draft, saying it lacks guarantees for human and political rights and cedes too much Kurdish-claimed territory to Baghdad's control.

Mr. Barzani acknowledges the proposed pact's deficiencies, but spends much of his time trying to find common ground between Baghdad and the front.

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RACJ prepares full agenda for 1992 auto sports season

By Aileen Bannayan
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Auto sports enthusiasts will have a full agenda to prepare for as the Royal Automobile Club of Jordan (RACJ) has set the 1992 season schedule with nine events that will surely suit everyone's taste.

The 1992 season will begin on Feb. 7 with an autotest which will be followed by the National Rally on Feb. 21.

The long awaited Jordan International Rally will take place on May 21-22 as part of the Middle East Rally Championship and in which the best drivers in the region will hopefully be taking part.

The first rallytour of the season will be the Oki Fax Rallytour on June 26 followed by another autotest on July 31.

The popular Rumman Hill Climb will take place on Aug. 21. The third autotest is set for Oct. 9 while the second National Rally of the year will be on Nov. 20. The season will be concluded with a rallytour set for Dec. 18.

The organising committee at RACJ hope that all auto sports competitors will actively take part in the scheduled events in order to achieve a successful and competitive season.

"The quality of the organised events — in terms of pin-point organisation and active participation and the achievement of better results — is our foremost aim," the chief marshal of auto sports events at RACJ, Mr. Bashir Asfour, told the Jordan Times.

"The 1991 season was quite good. We have some excellent drivers but the problem they face is the absence of sponsors. This is why a great number of competitors took part in the rallytours as there's not much expense involved and no set specifications for the participating cars," said Mr. Asfour. Adding that "if drivers take part in all the events, their continued participation and re-



A scene from the 1983 Jordan International Rally (file-photo)

sults would hopefully draw enough sponsorship to further enhance auto sports in Jordan."

The 1990-91 auto sports season is now over with Nasser Bustami topping the standings in the Drivers Open Championship of Jordan with a lead of 176.5 points. He is closely followed by Ghaith Bilbeisi with 164 points in second place, while Ma'rouf Abu Samra finished third with 152 points.

Ahmad Komok, who won this year's final autotest, captured the Autotests Open Championship first place with 57 points.

Drivers Open runner up Bilbeisi came in second with 52 points and Sinan Sami followed closely with 51 points in third place.

The 1991 season witnessed only five events as it commenced with the Oki Fax rallytour on May 31 in which Suhail Marar and George Haddad won first place. Amjad Farrah and Mazen Dajani came in second, while Sinan Sami

and S. Al Khatib finished third. The Baladna rallytour was on Aug. 30 in which Sinan Sami and Khaled Abu Ghazaleh won first place followed by Wa'el Abdo and Tareq Mugharbi in second place and Isa Halabi and Laith Bisharat finished third.

Ma'rouf Abu Samra won the Asfourco Autotest on Sept. 20 followed by Bashir Bustami in second place and Yamil Komok in third place. Ahmad Komok won the second autotest on Oct. 25, followed by Ma'rouf Abu Samra in second place and Ghaith Bilbeisi in third place.

The Aqua-pure Rallytour on Nov. 29 was the last event of the season affecting the overall standings in the Drivers Open Championship. Sinan Sami and Khaled Abu Ghazaleh in a Toyota Hilux won the rallytour followed by Wa'el Abdo and Tareq Mugharbi in an Opel Kadett in second place, while Ghaith Bilbeisi and Ammar Tathouni in a Toyota Corolla

finished third. Ruba Darwish and Shaden Shunnaq in an Opel Omega won the ladies category.

"A positive attribute about 1992 is that it will include all the events competitors have been waiting for. (The 1990-91 season was disrupted following the Gulf war and events in the region). Everyone is anticipating a year full of competition, which is very encouraging," said Mr. Asfour.

The 1992 Middle East Championship schedule has also been set with the following rallies:

The Qatar Rally on Feb. 13-14; the Lebanon Rally on June 13-20 and later on Oct. 10-11; the Oman Rally on Oct. 29-30; and the Dubai Rally on Dec. 3-4 in addition to the aforementioned Jordan International Rally.

According to Mr. Asfour, the United Arab Emirates will organise the Desert Challenge Rally on April 22-24 and the Cyprus International Rally will be held on Sept. 24-27.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

AC Milan stretches lead

ROME (R) — Unbeaten AC Milan extended their lead at the top of the Italian League to two points Sunday with a 1-1 draw at Lazio while second-placed Juventus lost 1-0 at champions Sampdoria. German striker Karlheinz Riedle gave Lazio the lead in the 52nd minute but prolific Dutchman Marco van Basten put Milan back on level terms just three minutes later. A headed goal by Sampdoria's Yugoslav midfielder Srečko Katancic condemned Juventus to only their second league defeat of the season. Third-placed Napoli had to settle for a 3-3 draw at home to Foggia after conceding two late goals. They remain four points behind Milan. The Italian League programme now takes a three-week break with Bari still without a league win after 14 games. They drew 0-0 at home to Atalanta Sunday and to add to their woes defender Giovanni Loseto was sent off early in the second half.

Marseille crushes Rennes 5-1

PARIS (R) — A hat trick by ace marksman Jean-Pierre Papin helped league leaders Marseille to a comfortable 5-1 home victory against struggling Rennes in the French League Saturday. Papin now tops the table of scorers with 16 goals, followed by Liberian striker George Weah, who scored his 14th to help Monaco clinch a 3-1 victory against Cannes. The club of the principality stay second three points behind the French champions, who have a game in hand. Marseille, who had been relatively unimpressive in their last few matches, delighted their home fans, with international midfielders Franck Sauzeau and Jean-Philippe Durand scoring a goal each. Unfashionable Caen, who fell 5-1 at Auxerre, and Paris St. Germain, who drew 1-1 at Le Havre, share third place two points behind Monaco. Nimes, without international striker Eric Cantona, who said Thursday he was ending his professional career after being suspended for two months by the French League's disciplinary commission, managed the only goalless draw of the night at Lens.

PSV consolidates lead in Dutch League

AMSTERDAM (R) — PSV Eindhoven did just enough to beat lowly Fortuna Sittard 1-0 Saturday night to consolidate their slim lead in the Dutch first division. But the PSV team's depletion through injuries was only too well reflected in lame play which undermined the urgent need to get their star Brazilian international striker Romario off the sick list to put some spark back into their attack. It took 37 minutes of uneventful play before Willem Kieft was able to find the solitary goal. PSV now move clear at the top of the league with 30 points from 18 games. But Feyenoord follows just two points behind after the same number of games and will have a chance to close the gap Sunday when they host mid-ranking local rivals Sparta Rotterdam.

Abdul Jabbar mulls comeback

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Former Los Angeles Lakers centre Kareem Abdul Jabbar is thinking about coming out of retirement to dramatize former Magic Johnson's fight against AIDS, with the implication that any salary would go to HIV research. "It's something that crossed my mind," Abdul Jabbar said in a television interview with CBS. "When I heard the news about Earvin's HIV positive testing, it really affected me and I wanted to do something to help my friend. And the thing I do best is play basketball. And it is the first thing that came into my mind. 'It's been really hard trying to figure out exactly how to contribute to the efforts to deal with this problem. And I always felt that I should do what I do best, which is play basketball.' Abdul Jabbar, 44, the National Basketball Association's (NBA) all-time leading scorer and shot-blocker, retired from the Los Angeles Lakers after the 1989-90 season.

Olympic flame feted in Paris

PARIS (AP) — Two thousand people dressed in white and carrying torches, banners and illuminated mobiles marched up the Champs Elysees Saturday to mark the arrival of the Winter Olympic flame to this country. Following the torch up the broad avenue, the marchers represented snow, the colours of the French flag and Olympic rings, and the savvy region in the French Alps where February's games will be held. Some 200,000 spectators shivered in the cold, rarely applauding, as they watched the flame lead the procession up Paris' most famous boulevard. Mournful, avant-garde music by composer Nicolas Frize poured from speakers as the marchers strode past, some clanging cowbells and others calling out, "we're cold."

Galloway retains WBO title

CAPE TOWN (R) — Manning Galloway of the United States retained his World Boxing Organisation (WBO) welterweight title with a split points decision over Nika Khumalo of South Africa. Two of the three judges had the American ahead on points after the 12-round fight. Khumalo scored the only knockdown in the eighth round.

Tomba skies to 4th world cup victory

ALTA BADIA, Italy (AP) — Alberto Tomba beat a powerful Swiss coalition and skied to his fourth World Cup victory of this season in a men's slalom Sunday, before an excited crowd of 30,000 in this Italian Dolomite valley.

The 24-year-old Italian, nicknamed La bomba (the bomb) for his powerful and aggressive style, clocked the fastest time in both heats for a winning aggregate of two minutes, 22.73 seconds down the Gran Risa track.

Sunday's victory, Tomba's 23rd in the World Cup, propelled the

Italian skier atop the overall cup standings with 560 points.

Swiss Paul Accola, who finished third Sunday behind teammate Steve Locher, fell to second place with 530 points.

Locher was second to Tomba in both runs and ended 0.37 seconds behind the Italian.

Accola, who had beat Mr. Tomba twice in the initial World Cup races in the United States last month, lagged 1.01 seconds behind.

Two other Swiss skiers, Hans Pieren and Michael Von

Gruenigen, placed fourth and fifth respectively with gaps of 1.15 and 1.59 seconds.

Jeremy Nobis, of Park City, Utah, fell and withdrew in the second run after clocking the sixth fastest time in the first heat. Tomba hit a gate in the upper part of the second run and skied down with a gate flag around his neck.

"Something unpredictable always happens to me. Luckily I manage to win anyway," he said, as hundreds of his fans mobbed police to reach him at the finish line.

Tomba, a specialist between the gates and a double olympic champion in Calgary in 1988, nearly lost his pole during the second heat of the Sestriere slalom last Tuesday, but won that race.

The Swiss were his toughest rivals Sunday and four of them placed behind him.

It was Tomba's third victory in this north Italian valley neighbouring Austria. He had won two giant slaloms here in 1987 and last year.

Tomba goes after a fifth win of the season in nearby Madonna Di Campiglio, where a slalom is scheduled Tuesday.

Another Italian skier, Josef Polig, beat Austrian rainer Salzberger for sixth place.

Defending World Cup champion Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, fifth after the first heat, made a streak of errors in the second run and finished 19th, 3.23 seconds slower than Tomba.

Swiss giant slalom specialists Urs Kaelin tore his left knee ligaments in a spill while warming up for the first run and was hospitalised in Bolzano.

Team officials said Kaelin will be sidelined for several weeks, thus missing the Olympic Games in Albertville in February.

Spurs put brake on Leeds

LONDON (R) — Leeds United nudged two points clear at the top of the weather-ravaged English Soccer League Saturday after only drawing 1-1 at home to Tottenham Hotspur.

While many clubs had to postpone their matches due to freezing pitches and fog, Leeds had a golden opportunity to move clear of rivals Manchester United.

But Spurs, 2-0 winners at Elland Road last season and one of only 10 first division clubs in action Saturday, took an early lead and again proved hard to beat away from home.

Manchester United, who have two games in hand, could regain the lead at Chelsea, weather per-

mitting. UEFA Cup quarterfinalists Liverpool again frustrated Brian Clough's Nottingham Forest with a 2-0 home win.

Forest have not won a league match at Anfield since Clough brought them back into the top division in 1977.

In Scotland, champions Rangers won 3-1 at Falkirk, but Hearts stayed top after beating Motherwell by the same score.

Seventeen league games were postponed. Champions Arsenal, despite under-soil heating, had to postpone their match against Norwich shortly before the kick-off due to the fog.

GOREN BRIDGE.

WITH OMAR SHARIF
6 TANNAN HURCH
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TAKE THE BACK ROAD

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♦ Q 10 9 6 5
♥ K J 9 8
♦ A 9 4

WEST
♦ 10 4
♥ K 8 7 3
♦ 10 7 5
♥ J 8 7 5

EAST
♦ A J 9 8 7 2
♥ A Q
♦ Q 6 3
♥ Q 3

SOUTH
♦ K 6 5 3
♥ A 2
♦ K 10 6 2

The bidding:
North East South West
Pass 1 ♦ Pass Pass
Dbl 2 ♦ Pass Pass
Dbl Pass 3 ♦ Pass

Opening lead: Ten of ♦

A single clue is all that a competent declarer might need to come up with a winning line. Consider this hand from a recent team game.

Experience shows that it pays to compete rather than let the opponents play unmolested at the two-level, hence, North's repeat takeout double. With slightly better spade spots South would have passed. Even on this layout, two spades could have been set a trick had the defenders collected everything they were due, but we cannot fault South's decision to remove to three

clubs.

Prospects for the 4-3 fit didn't look promising when West attacked with the ten of spades. East won the ace and cashed the ace and queen of hearts. West echoing to show encouragement. Declarer, Art Crystal of Norwalk, Conn., needed no more information to come up with the only line that offered a chance for the contract.

East reverted to a spade at trick four, ruffed in dummy to make sure of scoring the low trump, while keeping control of the suit. West was marked with the king of hearts and probably one club honor, yet had not responded to the opening bid. Therefore, West could not hold the queen of diamonds as well. So declarer led the jack of diamonds from the table for a backward finesse!

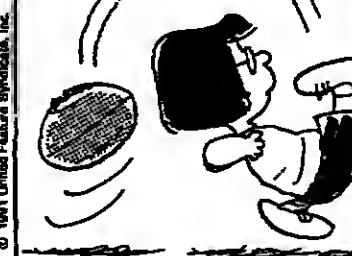
After capturing East's queen with the ace, declarer finessed the eight of diamonds and cashed the king, clearing the suit. When a heart was led from the table, East could not ruff profitably, so declarer was able to score a low trump. To prevent West from discarding a heart when declarer tried to ruff on the board, South continued with the king of spades. Whether East ruffed high or low, or did not ruff at all, the defenders could get only one more trick and the contract rolled home. Try it.

Peanuts

YOU KICK THE BALL, MARCIE, AND I'LL CATCH IT.



WHERE WERE YOU?



Andy Capp

... IN OTHER WORDS ...



IF HE CAN'T GET HIS WORDS RIGHT, HOW CAN YOU TRUST HIS FIGURES?



Mutt'n'Jeff

MUTT, IS TODAY MONDAY OR FRIDAY?



OH GOOD! I LIKE THURSDAYS!



WELL, THURSDAYS I CAN TELL MYSELF TOMORROW IS FRIDAY! FRIDAYS I GET PAID!



MUTT, WHEN I MET YOU JUST NOW WAS GOING UP THE STREET OR DOWN?



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY DECEMBER 16, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Obtaining the advice you need from a higher-up won't be as difficult as you assume it is going to be this afternoon and evening, especially through a chance meeting that occurs.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) You are able to go directly to the most influential person with whom you have any contact whatever and get him to help you make your daily existence more satisfactory.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Make sure you listen to what that new acquaintance has to say who has had more experience in lines of endeavors that appeal very much to you.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Organize those obligations and responsibilities whether of a personal or business nature so they are handled in a more even and suitable fashion.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Don't be so timid and sensitive but talk out that situation existing between you and another so that you can have more accord.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have many tasks to do but first you would be wise to make your surroundings more attractive so that you can operate there with more pleasure.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can have some happy moments today but especially if you prepare for them early in the

day by making appointments with those you like.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Look at how conditions are trending at your residence and show you do value the good will of those family members who mean so much to you.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You now are able to see and enjoy the many personal and usual contacts with whom you have an sort of desire to see more and you can get out correspondence.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Whatever brings you increased income is very good for you now so make a point to show you are the one who is practical minded and financial based.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your interest in gaining more personal good will from social contacts is fine now so contact those you like and let them see you are devoted to them.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Your goal now is to prepare yourself for the future which is excellent but make sure you do show others you are the one who is willing to take advice from experts.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Your need for more social contact is now important so join in any group activities where there are similar interests to your own you may have.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"I bought some motivation tapes but I just can't get motivated to use them."

JUMBLE. THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME.

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

FLAUW

EXOD

WHYROT

LOMUVE

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here:

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: RURAL EJECT DETACH POSTAL

Answer: What the fusspot found it "easy" being "HARD" TO PLEASE

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Financial Markets

Foreign Exchange Market Summary
(December 9-December 13, 1991)

AMMAN — The U.S. currency fluctuated within narrow margins during the previous week, as news of the Soviet developments and EC summit dominated trading activity. It thus ended the week marginally higher against the pound and yen, but at an average of 1.37 per cent higher against other European currencies.

The dollar recovered slightly Monday on short covering, particularly in view of market concerns over the likely consequences of the break-up of the Soviet Union. Traders were also watchful for the EC summit in Maastricht. The dollar thus closed at what proved to be its lowest levels for the week against major currencies at 1.5715 marks and 128.28 yen.

Tuesday took the U.S. unit even higher due to continued apprehension about the situation in the USSR. Conflicting rumours and reports about the likelihood of President Gorbachev's resignation fuelled short term demand for the dollar. The dollar ended at its highest against the pound sterling at 1.8060 dollars to the pound, which appreciated substantially at the end of the week.

Wednesday, on the other hand, witnessed a dollar retreat, encouraged by the perceived lessening in tension in the USSR, and failure to push the dollar to breach resistance at 1.5900 marks. The German currency witnessed renewed appreciation against the yen to reach 81.94 yen as the Japanese unit suffered from the continued decline in Tokyo stock prices and speculation of a near term decrease in interest rates. The successful conclusion of the EC summit, namely towards moving closer towards complete monetary union in 1999, lessened fears of a German interest rate hike under the umbrella of a realignment of ERM exchange rates. But some analysts, nevertheless, maintained that the Bundesbank will avoid raising interest rates as long as the dollar remains below 1.60 marks, but may have to raise them if the mark retreats.

Favourable U.S. economic data boosted the dollar against European currencies Thursday. The mark's retreat to 81.64 yen limited the dollar's gains against the Japanese currency, however.

Trading activity centered on the pound sterling Friday. The pound rose sharply against all major currencies after comments from the Chancellor of the Exchequer that the pound's fluctuation bands within the ERM will eventually be reduced from six per cent to 2.25 per cent, while keeping its present central value of 2.95 marks. The Chancellor's comments alleviated previous expectations of a devaluation in the pound, which rose sharply to reach 2.5772 marks and 1.8210 dollars, as traders hurried to cover short positions against the mark and the dollar. Some analysts, however, remained skeptical, maintaining the motive behind the Chancellor's remarks was to boost the pound in order to justify an interest rate cut before elections next July. They, nevertheless, agreed that the comments were in line with the EC's commitment to avoid a realignment. They added that the Bank of France's reported intervention in the U.S. market, in which it sold marks for the French franc, was a further demonstration of this commitment, when taking into consideration that central banks seldom intervene directly outside their home markets.

In the U.S., November's Consumer Price Index showed a marginal rise, thus fueling expectations of another Fed discount rate cut. Nevertheless, the dollar remained supported against the other European currencies, ending the week at its highest closing levels for the week against all but the pound. Observers attributed its temporary resilience, despite the bearish sentiment towards it, to a combination of factors; namely, the lack of new substantive economic information, the political upheavals in the Soviet republics, and the fact that most traders already have short dollar positions outstanding.

As for this week, while some observers are watchful for a German interest rate rise and/or a Fed interest rate cut, expectations are for a dollar trading range of 1.55-1.61 marks.

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	6/12/1991 Close	13/12/1991 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.8165	1.8158	(0.04) %
Deutsche Mark	1.5665	1.5890	(1.45) %
Swiss Franc	1.5645	1.4030	(1.32) %
French Franc	5.3575	5.4300	(1.34) %
Japanese Yen	127.90	129.08	(0.09) %

USD Per STG

Euro-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	6/12/1991 1-Month (%)	13/12/1991 1-Month (%)	1-Month (%)	1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	4.81	4.62	4.68	4.56
Sterling Pound	10.50	10.56	10.56	10.31
Deutsche Mark	9.43	9.51	9.51	9.37

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6800	0.6820
Sterling Pound	1.2331	1.2393
Deutsche Mark	0.4274	0.4295
Swiss Franc	0.4839	0.4863
French Franc	0.1201	0.1257
Japanese Yen	0.5266	0.5292
Dutch Guilder	0.3791	0.3810
Swedish Krona	0.1177	0.1183
Italian Lira	0.0566	0.0569
Belgian Franc	0.02076	0.02086

Per 100

Major industrial states explore ways to aid weak world, Soviet economies

NEW YORK (R) — Deputy finance ministers from major industrial nations explored ways Saturday to promote economic reforms in the fast-disintegrating Soviet Union and faster, more sustainable growth in the global economy.

"We reviewed the world economy and the Soviet situation," U.S. Treasury Undersecretary David Mulford told reporters after a one-day meeting behind closed doors.

Canadian Deputy Finance Minister David Dodge said that both the Soviet and global economies looked worse than had been expected just a few months ago.

"All our economies are under-performing," he said.

Mr. Mulford said that the Group of Seven (G-7) nations — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — were all concerned about recent slow global growth.

Exports have been one of the few bright spots for the U.S. economy over recent months but they could be threatened by slower growth overseas.

The United States has been pressing its G-7 allies to do more to promote faster global growth, particularly through lower interest rates. Most have complied, although Germany has kept its rates high to contain inflation.

Faced with sagging popularity in the opinion polls and an election in November, President George Bush has promised to produce an "action plan" next month to get the stalled U.S. economy moving.

But some of America's allies are worried that this might boost the already burgeoning U.S. budget deficit.

"Any major action beyond cosmetics on fiscal policy is not a good idea," said one G-7 source who declined to be named.

International Monetary Fund (IMF) representatives told the G-7 deputy finance ministers that growth in the industrial world

next year now looks to be somewhat slower than the 2-3 per cent pace the IMF predicted just a few months ago.

Much of that is due to the sluggish performance of the U.S. economy, which may grow only about 2-3 per cent in 1992 instead of the three per cent expected previously.

However, Mr. Mulford also noted that growth in Japan and Germany is slowing. The French economy is flat while that of Britain is still contracting, he added.

"We can still expect a recovery of growth in the industrial world in 1992, but it could be somewhat less than expected," IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus said at the end of last month.

Mr. Dodge said the Soviet economy has also deteriorated more rapidly than was expected just a month ago.

Washington has called for an international conference next month to coordinate aid to the Soviet Union amid mounting concern that food shortages and economic chaos there could prompt a military coup.

Mr. Dodge complained that Europe and Japan have been slow to ship food to the Soviet Union and have failed to keep pace with the performance of Canada and the United States.

"From the Canadian perspective, and I'm sure that will be echoed by the Americans, we've heard a lot of talk but very little action (from Europe and Japan)," he said.

The United States also wants to make sure that the IMF does everything it can to promote economic reforms in the fast-disintegrating Soviet Union.

One G-7 source said that Washington wants the Soviet Union to withdraw its application for membership in the fund so that it would be easier for the increasingly individual republics to join.

U.S. airlines may lose \$2b this year

WASHINGTON (AP) — An airline industry spokesman has predicted that U.S. airline losses will approach \$2 billion this year, and he called for tax relief for the business.

The war in the Gulf "dried up our traffic and the recession's kept it down," Robert Aaronson, president of the Air Transport Association (ATA) of America, told a news conference. "The airline industry is in serious financial crisis."

Congress should cut ticket taxes and reduce taxes on airlines, he said. The current passenger ticket tax is 10 per cent, while the cargo tax is 6.25 per cent.

The industry is publicising its campaign with announcements

that airlines and travel agents are enclosing in ticket jackets. They say: "The price of this ticket includes taxes and fees which are imposed on air transportation by government authorities."

Passenger traffic will be an estimated 450 million in 1991, a 3.5 per cent decline from last year, Mr. Aaronson said. There have been 50,000 industry layoffs and a drop in air freight traffic, he added.

Pan Am, Eastern and Midway went out of business this year. Last year's losses in the industry were a record \$3.9 billion.

The two years of red ink have wiped out all the profits the industry has earned since scheduled airline service began in 1925, the ATA reported.

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World Bank wants more debt cuts for sub-Saharan Africa

WASHINGTON (AP) — The World Bank is looking to governments of well-off countries to relieve the debt burden of sub-Saharan Africa, but will not reduce the \$25 billion the countries owe the bank itself.

The bank estimates that major lending countries have forgiven \$1 billion in debt owed by sub-Saharan countries over the past four years. The total debt of these countries totals about \$176 billion.

Even though debtors' interest payments have been reduced by about \$900 million a year, the unpaid interest they owe is still piling up at an annual rate of nearly \$10 billion, according to the latest World Bank figures on international debt made public Sunday.

The bank's report said that if creditor nations adopted recent proposals to reduce debts, it "will make a major contribution to restoring external viability in many low-income African countries."

"In a few extreme cases, even more generous treatment may be required," it said.

Asked in an interview if the bank would write off some of its African loans, spokesman Peter Riddleberger said, "you'd never get a financial officer to recommend it. Our first concern is to protect our bondholders."

The bank is owned by 155 countries, including the debtor

countries. But most of the money it lends comes from the sale of bonds all over the world. Their price could decline sharply — and so would the bank's ability to lend — if it reduced debts owed to it.

Ishtat Husain, the bank's chief economist for Africa, estimated that a proposal by British Prime Minister John Major could wipe out another \$46 billion worth of debt for sub-Saharan nations.

Mr. Husain estimated the average rate of interest at five per cent on that debt, resulting in another \$2.3 billion in savings for the debtor nations.

"A breakthrough is needed," Mr. Husain told a news conference.

Mr. Major made his debt relief proposal for Africa's poorest countries over a year ago, when he was chancellor of the exchequer. Mr. Husain said the creditor governments have been discussing Mr. Major's proposal, but have come to no decision.

South Africa would not be a beneficiary, since the World Bank estimates its citizens average annual income at \$2,470 a year, too high to qualify for debt relief.

Mr. Husain said something should be done to help other countries which are much poorer, but have not received much debt relief.

He cited Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, whose 100 mil-

lion people earned an average of \$250 a year in 1989, according to the bank's latest figures. He suggested that help also should go to the Ivory Coast, Congo and Cameroon, where the average per capita income is \$1,000 or less.

The U.N. Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) says the continent's economy may be on its way to a gradual recovery.

Issa Yassin Diallo, the ECA secretary general, predicted the growth of Africa's gross domestic product next year will remain steady at three per cent, same as this year.

"The region may well have entered into a phase of gradual recovery," Mr. Diallo said.

He attributed the favourable prospect to economic reforms by various governments and "a more solid partnership between Africa and its main development partners."

However, Mr. Diallo said economic reforms that might reduce income, increase unemployment and cut social services "will continue to raise considerable obstacles."

African leaders have repeatedly criticised reforms, especially those sponsored by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), saying they created hardships for the continent's poor.

Mr. Diallo said it was en-

couraging the two lending institutions were now "giving priority to the dual objective of economic growth with the poverty reduction, particularly through the creation of income generating employment for the disadvantaged."

Mr. Diallo made the comments in a meeting with foreign envoys and heads of United Nations agencies in Addis Ababa Thursday, but the report was not made public until Saturday.

He said agriculture was expected to benefit most from reforms. Growth in other sectors, however, would be slower.

Mr. Diallo said the shift of emphasis by the World Bank and IMF could make it easier for African nations to liberalise their economies, but the liberalisation should be gradual.

African countries shunning political reforms will find it difficult getting foreign aid, Mr. Diallo warned, because donors want democratisation.

He urged "a new and bolder approach" in the search for ways of solving the continent's massive foreign debt.

The total foreign debt owed by the sub-Saharan nations alone is about \$176 billion. Mr. Diallo said the aim should not be "the unrealistic elimination of debt" but to enable the continent to regain economic momentum lost "when the debt crisis arose more than a decade ago."

Total Third World and eastern European debt drops slightly

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Soviet Union is only "moderately" indebted, according to the World Bank, although estimates of its foreign debt range as high as \$100 billion.

The World Bank puts the Soviet debt at \$57 billion to \$71 billion in hard currency.

That figure does not include a few billion dollars in unpaid interest; Soviet debts in the soft, non-convertible currencies of eastern European and Third World countries, and money that Soviet republics and enterprises may have borrowed and not reported, according to World Bank officials.

The World Bank's figures are contained in its two-volume "World Debt Tables, 1991-2," made public Sunday.

The World Bank put total Third World and eastern European debt at the end of 1991 at \$1.351 trillion, a slight drop from the \$1.355 trillion in 1990.

The Soviet debt burden is not so heavy when its resources and foreign earnings are compared with those of other countries, said Lawrence Summers, a World Bank vice president and its chief economist.

"Soviet debt is equivalent to the country's earnings in just two weeks," Mr. Summers told a news conference last week in advance of the release of the

annual report.

In some heavily indebted countries, the debt is equivalent to a year's total earnings or more, according to bank figures.

According to bank figures, more than two years' earnings by the entire population of the Congo and the Ivory Coast would be needed to pay back their countries, debts, even if they spent no money on anything else. In Syria, Nigeria, Ecuador and Bolivia, it would take more than a year's work.

Brazil is the world's biggest debtor. It owed more than \$116 billion at the end of 1990 — over three months' earnings, according to bank figures.

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155
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Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

Cinema **RAINBOW** Tel: 625155
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Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30 p.m.

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Gorbachev criticises Baker's remarks, sees role in transition

NEW YORK (AP) — Mikhail Gorbachev said in an interview released Saturday that his country is on a perilous course and that he might continue to play a role in order to preserve the reforms he struggled for. He gave no indication his resignation was imminent.

In an interview to appear in this week's edition of Time magazine, Gorbachev also expressed some anger at the U.S. response to the rapid developments in his country.

"(Secretary of State) James Baker was overly hasty in saying the Soviet Union no longer exists," he said in the interview, conducted Friday afternoon in Moscow. "Things are in flux here. While we're still trying to figure things out, the U.S. seems to know everything already. I don't think that's loyalty, particularly toward those of us who favour partnership and full-fledged cooperation."

Mr. Baker arrived in Moscow Sunday to meet with Mr. Gorbachev, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and other leaders.

In addition to expressing displeasure with Mr. Baker, Mr. Gorbachev also appeared angry at Mr. Yeltsin for not informing him about the commonwealth plan.

"He didn't even call me. I found out that he had talked with George Bush and not to me. There was no need to draw Bush into this... I cannot approve or justify this style of behaviour. It's inadmissible."

In the interview, a transcript of which was seen Saturday, Mr. Gorbachev gave no indication his resignation was imminent. His spokesman, Andrei Grachev, said last week that the Soviet president intends to resign if a majority of the 12 remaining Soviet republics join the commonwealth being set up by Mr. Yeltsin.

That could happen as soon as this week. On Friday, five more republics said they would become part of the commonwealth, joining its founding Slavic republics: Russia, Byelorussia and Ukraine.

Asked if he would still be president Monday, Mr. Gorbachev said: "I'm sure I will." The 60-year-old president also indicated he would act as necessary to keep the transition from becoming any more chaotic.

"I'll use my powers as president, first of all as commander-in-chief of the armed forces," he said. "It's critical that we not lose control of the situation."

The United States and others have expressed concern about control of the Soviet nuclear arsenal, and the subject is expected to be raised by Mr. Baker on his trip.

On the question of the nuclear arsenal's security, Mr. Gorbachev said: "Any alarming speculation, here or abroad, about who will have his finger on the button is groundless."

Mr. Gorbachev did not spell out the part he might seek to play in the new commonwealth, but indicated he did not intend to step aside completely.

"By interacting with my colleagues, I'll try to let them know what my position is and help them to come together and reach agreements," he said. "But I don't want to be like the guest of honour at a banquet... what I want to do is participate in formulating the framework of the commonwealth and giving it substance."

"As far as my work is concerned, the main purpose of my life has already been fulfilled. I feel at peace with myself," he said. "At the same time, I feel that the capital I've accumulated should be fully used for the freedom of my country and international relations. And I feel strong enough to go on."

Mr. Gorbachev indicated he would make a strong pitch for more Western aid when he meets with Mr. Baker. "We need your help now. Immediately," he said. "Stop hesitation or we will have to pay a greater price in the end."

President Bush announced last week he would convene an international conference on aid to the Soviet Union, which is struggling with food and fuel shortages as winter bears down.

Mr. Gorbachev told French President Francois Mitterrand Saturday he saw his role in a reformed Soviet Union as that of a guardian of democracy and constitutional order, Soviet News Agency (TASS) said.

The two leaders spoke by telephone about the new commonwealth of independent states formed by the three Slav republics of Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia a week ago to replace the Soviet Union.

"Gorbachev said his task under the new conditions will be to preserve democracy and constitutional order, to guarantee observance by the former Soviet republics of their international obligations," TASS said.

In his conversation with Mr. Mitterrand, TASS said Mr. Gorbachev expressed views on how international assistance could be rendered "in this turbulent period of radical change in the country."

TASS quoted Mr. Mitterrand as saying he understood Mr. Gorbachev's stance and supported his efforts to stimulate democratic change in the Soviet Union.

President Gorbachev's allies insist he still has an important role. Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, co-architect of the perestroika reforms which brought democracy to the Soviet Union, said Mr. Gorbachev had much to contribute.

Alexander Yakovlev, renowned for his own role in establishing glasnost (openness) in Soviet society, suggested the commonwealth accord could be blended with Mr. Gorbachev's blueprint for a new union of sovereign states.

Mr. Shevardnadze told a congress of his Democratic Reform Movement Saturday that both he and Mr. Gorbachev wanted to help the process of transforming the commonwealth.

"I believe we can do many useful things for this process. He also understands this as do the Russian authorities and other republics. I advised Gorbachev not to rush into any resignation," TASS quoted him as saying.

Mr. Yakovlev, quoted by Moscow Radio, said the Democratic Reform Movement supported the commonwealth, but he believed it should be regarded only as an initiative and favoured holding a referendum.

"In his opinion, other variants are also possible. For example, a compromise between this agreement and draft union treaty being advocated by... Gorbachev," the radio said.

Mr. Yakovlev said society was entering a dangerous period when democracy could be challenged by "the angry man in the street."

Meanwhile, Soviet citizens believe Mikhail Gorbachev may soon be an ex-president, and many say good riddance to the man they hold personally responsible for the decrepit state of the economy.

Gorbachev should have resigned a long time ago, when his influence first started to wane, said construction worker Slava Kokhlov. "He should just go fishing at his dacha — if the Ukrainians give him permission."

For some, however, a future without Mr. Gorbachev looked bleak. "There could be nothing worse for the country than if Gorbachev resigned and all the republics try to exist separately," said Valentina Utkina, a 26-year-old chemical factory worker.

"We have a multi-ethnic country. I am Russian, my relatives are mainly Ukrainians, and I think we should try to stay together as a union."

"If we throw away the republics, nothing good will come of it. The new commonwealth won't be like the union, it will be a true union of sovereign republics, and that's not good," she said.

Engineer Minna Axelrod agreed. "It was tactless for the leaders of the three republics to get together without agreeing first with Gorbachev, utterly tactless. I can't believe they spoke to Bush before speaking to Gorbachev," she said.

"I am for Gorbachev, and I don't like the idea of having separate republics. I think we need a union. I like it when all the republics are one happy family."

Armenian Susanna Nikogasian was also against her republic joining the commonwealth, but for different reasons. "If you ask anyone in Armenia whether they want to be part of the new commonwealth, they will say 'no'. We want to be a completely independent state, we don't want to be dependent on anybody," she said.

"We had big gold reserves, but they were all taken from us and they gave us nothing. Now we're poor. I don't know what will happen next, but if we're separate, there's still hope."

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Bonn to recognise Yugoslav republics despite U.N. warnings

BONN (Agencies) — German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher said Sunday Bonn would recognise Yugoslavia's breakaway republics of Croatia and Slovenia as independent, despite U.N. warnings that this could block peace efforts.

Mr. Genscher said he believed the rebel republics would meet standards for recognition that Germany and France would propose to European Community (EC) foreign ministers in Brussels Monday.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar has said that "uncoordinated" recognition of the two republics would undermine any peacekeeping venture aimed at ending civil war in the Balkan federation.

"I think tomorrow we will first seek a decision on the catalogue of criteria and then afterwards the individual governments will have to make their decisions," he told Deutschlandfunk Radio.

The chancellor said that Germany... that this decision will be made before Christmas. This intention has not changed," Mr. Genscher added.

The U.N. Security Council, meeting in New York, earlier reached informal agreement on a resolution that asks states to refrain from taking any action that might contribute to tension in Yugoslavia.

The United Nations was expected to decide Sunday to send observers to war-torn Yugoslavia after a vote was delayed by Germany's threat to recognise the breakaway republics of Croatia and Slovenia.

Bonn's threatened move, which is opposed by the U.N. leadership, the U.S. and several other countries, blocked a vote in the Security Council late Saturday after France insisted the original text be revised.

However the council was expected to approve a text Sunday that would send U.N. observers to Yugoslavia to investigate whether a peacekeeping operation is possible. U.N. sources said the team would comprise 12 civilians and six military officers.

Mr. Perez de Cuellar has said no peacekeeping force can be sent in until a ceasefire is fully recognised in the country.

A war of words broke out over the weekend between the secretary-general and Mr. Genscher.

Mr. Genscher told Mr. Perez de Cuellar in a letter Friday that publication of the secretary-general's views might encourage

thought to be slight, a Scotland Yard spokesman said. Explosives experts were carrying out a detailed search of the gallery, Britain's best-known art museum, in Trafalgar Square.

Police cordoned off part of the square. "Explosives officers are searching the whole of the gallery in case other firebombs have been hidden there," a police spokesman said.

Police would not say whether the device resembled those used in a wave of pre-Christmas bombings in Britain by the Irish Republican Army (IRA).

Early Saturday firebombs exploded in one of Britain's biggest shopping centres, Brent Cross in North London, marking the third consecutive weekend of pre-Christmas bombings.

The IRA has not claimed responsibility for the Brent Cross fires, but police said the devices were the same as those used in attacks claimed by the group on the previous two weekends.

U.S. Congressman Stephen Solarz has nominated Mr. Evans for next year's Nobel Peace Prize in recognition of Australia's efforts to bring about a Cambodian settlement.

Canberra's new ambassador to Phnom Penh, John Holloway, said aid was running at about nine million Australian dollars (\$6.9 million) a year and could double over the next year.

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Contributions to the U.N. effort total about 30 million dollars (\$23.1 million).

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the Serbian-dominated Yugoslav army to escalate the conflict.

He also pointed to European treaties on the right to self-determination, and said if recognition was denied, the Yugoslav army might believe its "policy of conquest" was validated.

The U.N. chief responded: "I agree with you that public statements can exacerbate the tensions in Yugoslavia. That is why mine have been few and carefully considered."

Recognition, he said, "could have grave consequences for the Balkan region as a whole and would seriously undermine my own efforts" to deploy a peacekeeping force.

Meanwhile, heavy fighting flared across the front in Croatia, prompting more refugees to flee from the central front and making a mockery out of the U.N.-sponsored ceasefire.

The fighting Saturday came as U.N. Security Council members clashed in their attempt to help end Yugoslavia's nearly six-month civil war.

Croatian media and officials reported attacks in the embattled eastern Slavonia region and on the Adriatic coast. Refugees were reportedly fleeing from heavy fighting around the central front.

Also Saturday, the Serb-dominated federal presidency demanded "urgent and decisive action" by the international community to prevent recognition of Slovenia and Croatia, according to Belgrade-based Tanjug News Agency.

Serbia, the largest Yugoslav republic, maintains that if Croatia becomes independent, its 600,000 Serbs must be allowed self-determination. Croatia charges Serbia and the Serb-dominated federal army are using that as a pretext to grab land.

The Belgrade daily Politika reported in its early Sunday edition that the Serb-held village of Beli Manastir, near the Hungarian border, was under heavy attack Saturday, apparently from Croatian forces.

Firebomb explodes inside U.K. gallery

LONDON (R) — A firebomb exploded in Britain's National Gallery early Sunday, causing slight damage to the new wing of one of London's landmarks.

The incendiary device went off inside the recently opened saunbury wing of the National Gallery at about 0330 GMT, causing a small fire in the bookshop, Scotland Yard said. There were no injuries and no warning.

"The fire was put out by sprinklers and damage was thought to be slight," a Scotland Yard spokesman said.

Explosives experts were carrying out a detailed search of the gallery, Britain's best-known art museum, in Trafalgar Square.

Police cordoned off part of the square. "Explosives officers are searching the whole of the gallery in case other firebombs have been hidden there," a police spokesman said.

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Baker starts visit to 4 Soviet republics

MOSCOW (Agencies) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived in Moscow Sunday for talks focusing on what will happen to the Soviet nuclear arsenal as the country undergoes major change, Soviet News Agency (TASS) reported.

He is due to visit all four Soviet republics where nuclear weapons are deployed — Russia, Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan.

In Shannon, Ireland, Mr. Baker said he had specific proposals to ensure the security of the former superpower's 27,000 nuclear weapons.

"We will be making some suggestions... about ways in which we can cooperate with them to steps to be certain that we have safe and secure and responsible

control of nuclear weapons," he said early Sunday. He declined to give details.

Congress approved \$400 million to help eliminate Soviet nuclear weapons. The Bush administration, initially cool to the proposal, has not said how it would use the funds.

Baker, who is due to meet Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and Russian President Boris Yeltsin Monday, spoke to reporters on his flight from Washington to Ireland's Shannon Airport for refuelling before heading on to Moscow.

Mr. Baker said Sunday he regretted that Mr. Gorbachev had criticised him in a Time magazine

interview. "I don't think anyone has been more supportive of President Gorbachev and his administration and what they have done than I have in the councils of the U.S. government and otherwise," Mr. Baker said.

"I have been outspoken in praising him and saying none of it would have happened but for one man — Mr. Gorbachev," he said.

Mr. Baker, talking to reporters before his plane was refueled here, said Mr. Gorbachev had shown courage "almost without parallel" in trying to reform the Soviet political and economic processes.

"His leadership is greatly to be admired and respected," Mr. Baker said.

India refines offer of talks with militants

CHANDIGARH, India (AP) — India is ready to open talks with Sikh militants without barring a discussion of their demand for independence, Home Minister S.B. Chavan said.

Mr. Chavan's statement Saturday in the state capital of Punjab, where Sikhs want their own nation, marked a refinement of government offers to negotiate an end to the eight-year Sikh rebellion.

Previously, government in New Delhi had said they were prepared to discuss any matter within the framework of the Indian constitution, implicitly ruling out any talk of a separate Sikh state.

He spoke at a news conference ending his first visit to Punjab since the current Congress government took office six months ago.

"I come here to work for the Cambodian people and national unity, not for separatism. I appeal to all Cambodians from every walk of life to help get (the peace plan) implemented," he said on his arrival in Bangkok.

Under the United Nations-brokered settlement signed in Paris in October, leaders of the Hanouk-backed Phnom Penh government and the three guerrilla armies that fought it for 13 years will sit on the Supreme National Council until elections are held early in 1993.

The Council was due to meet in Phnom Penh for the first time last month. The session was cancelled after a mob seeking retribution for the Khmer Rouge's bloody 1975-79 rule attacked its President Khieu Samphan and ran him out of town.

An emergency meeting of Cambodians and U.N. Security Council members in Thailand succeeded in bringing the peace plan back on track, with Phnom Penh pledging tighter security for its erstwhile foes.

No date has been set for the next meeting since Khieu Sam-

Togo's military repeats demand for end to assembly

LOME (R) — Togo's army repeated its demand for dissolution of the West African country's reformist transitional legislature Sunday, reviving fears that a peaceful political compromise may be far off after a bloody putsch two weeks ago.

A military statement read on national radio at 0900 GMT accused members of the assembly, the High Council of the Republic (HCR), of being "pseudo-democrats" after they banned President Gnassingbe Eyadema's former ruling party last month.

It also demanded that state sector appointments made by interim Prime Minister Joseph

Kokou Koffigoh be annulled.

The radio, which was occupied by troops for a week before the putsch, broadcast its own message asking Togolese to stay calm and stressing the army had not retaken control of the building.

Normal programmes continued during the morning.

Soldiers loyal to Mr. Eyadema, who was stripped of most of his powers in August by a national pro-democracy conference, seized Mr. Koffigoh in an assault on his residence on Dec. 3 and forced him to scrap a transitional cabinet intended to lead the nation to multi-party rule.

Talks on a three-year phaseout of U.S. forces have been stalled by lack of agreement on some "critical issues," presidential Executive Secretary Franklin Drilon told reporters Saturday.

The two sides began the talks after the Philippine senate in September rejected a new bases treaty with the United States.

President Corason Aquino suggested a three-year phaseout to cushion the impact on the economy of a sudden U.S. withdrawal.

Agreement on a gradual phaseout is necessary to override a Philippine constitutional provision which bans the presence of foreign troops in the country after 1991 unless covered by a treaty approved by the senate in Manila.

The rejected treaty would have allowed the United States to keep Subic Bay Naval Base near Manila for 10 more years. Washington has given up Clark Air Base which was wrecked by the eruption of the Mount Pinatubo volcano in June.

Philippine senators said they would not demand an immediate U.S. pullout if a phaseout formula not exceeding three years was agreed upon.

"We are not very optimistic (the issues) will be resolved," Mr. Drilon said.

"We are preparing for a situation where we may mutually agree on a one-year withdrawal or sending (the U.S.) a notice of withdrawal or receiving (from the U.S.) a notice of withdrawal before the end of the year."

"Comrades, the conflicts are going to emerge in January when the real negotiations start, when we are going to see that government leaders have plastic smiles."

"The apartheid regime will

ANC will rule S. Africa in two years — leader

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa will be ruled by an African National Congress (ANC) government within two years, one of its leaders said Sunday.

In a British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio interview made available to Reuters, ANC Secretary-General Cyril Ramaphosa said apartheid would end soon.

"We would expect that the nightmare of apartheid will end fairly soon and within two years we will have a government of the people," Mr. Ramaphosa said.